

THE DIVA IN THE GARDEN: OPERATIC VOICE, SEXUATE DIFFERENCE, AND
PASTORALISM, 1850—1923

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ABSTRACT

Shannon Wong Lerner: The Diva in the Garden: Operatic Voice, Sexuate Difference, and
Pastoralism, 1850—1923
(Under the direction of Christian Lundberg)

This dissertation explores the operatic diva in American public culture focusing on the period of 1850—1923. As women, divas had to balance their success with the image of the wife, the mother, and the woman as connected to nature. The core questions for this study are twofold. 1. How are representations of the diva as woman mediated by representations of women being closer to nature? 2. How do these representations figure in the diva's access to culture, and by extension, what do these representations say about the place of women in relationship to culture and technology? To answer these questions, I take up representations of the diva in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century America, tracking the ways that the persona of the diva is articulated within a popular cultural movement of their era, pastoralism. Engaging pastoral symbols of the *wilderness*, the *garden*, and the *machine*, divas negotiated women's sentimental relegation to *nature* as a means of navigating modern discourses as regarding working women as successful individuals. Divas first occupied pastoral aesthetic themes as the *sublime* as the *awe* people felt in natural spaces through the beauty of the divas' voices. But as the diva's place in public culture evolved, the diva transitioned from the *natural sublime* to the *technological sublime* by highlighting the artifice in contemporary vocal technique. This transition paradoxically refigured the diva into a simultaneous object of natural bliss and

technological horror. The technological sublime created space for divas to move away from the sacrifice and self-destruction of a Romantic narrative about prima donnas, to instead turn to a sexuated, singularly-pleasured focus on divas' well-being and self-care. To make this case, I will take up three case studies which transition divas from the natural sublime to the technological sublime: Jenny Lind, Adelina Patti, and Geraldine Farrar.

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CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM OF THE DIVA IN THE GARDEN: PASTORAL SENTIMENTALITY AND THE ARTIFICIAL CHARACTER OF THE DIVA

Introduction

This dissertation demonstrates how rhetoric and performance contribute to the study of opera as a popular cultural form. Scholars have made productive efforts to open a dialogue between opera studies and performance studies to see what each discipline might be able to learn from the other.¹ This study adds questions of rhetoric to this field of study, taking into consideration that divas' performances and publicity campaigns were strategic and persuasive so they could extend and expand their preeminence in public culture. I analyze their modes of self-fashioning in primary sources such as newspaper and journal articles, self-authored pieces, and memoirs. This unlikely ménage among opera studies, performance studies, and rhetoric seeks to explicate how divas drew from textual and performance traditions of opera as much as they intervened in political perspectives regarding women in the modern, social world. Further, they strove to interrupt scripted or repetitive historical staging of operas to present unorthodox performances of previous interpretations. By doing so, divas changed roles, compositions, and even the way women were seen off the stage, circulating in public

¹ Suzanne G. Cusick, "On Musical Performances of Gender and Sex," in *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity, and Music*, ed. Elaine Barkin and Lydia Hamessley (Como, Italy: New Press, 1999), 25; Michelle Duncan, "The Operatic Scandal of the Singing Body: Voice, Presence, Performativity," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 16, no. 3 (2004): 283-306; Mary Ann Smart, "Defrosting Instructions: A Response," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 16, no. 3 (2004): 311-18.

spheres.

Divas not only staged productions of female roles in opera, but they also had a strong public presence in mass media through newspaper and journal interviews and self-authored articles. In these chapters, I will use primary and secondary texts from their respective eras to illuminate the relationship of the diva to the primary cultural symbol of modern public culture: pastoralism. Mid-nineteenth-century to early-twentieth-century audiences, musicians, art critics, and the public at large came to understand the diva's voice as a part of pastoralism that had a powerful hold on the American imagination. For example, art critics and audience members, after seeing a performance by Jenny Lind, a soprano opera singer who toured America in 1850—1852 (nicknamed the “Swedish Nightingale”), compared her voice creatively to pastoral objects of birds, forests, and brooks in Sweden, and then to the technological objects of a train, and even to the barrel of a gun. Through the diva's voice, pastoralism then offered to Victorians and early moderns nostalgic ties to the past, and ultimately to the land; however, it also alerted them to the present and future changes of human-built landscapes that came with industrialization, technology, and progress.

Leo Marx describes pastoralism as part of a sentimental time when “the felicity represented by an image of a natural landscape, a terrain . . . unspoiled . . . a symbolic landscape . . . [was] understood as movement away from an ‘artificial’ world, a world identified with ‘art,’ using this word in its broadest sense to mean the disciplined habits of mind or arts developed by organized communities.”² As I will examine, the diva took up the paradox between naturalness and artifice within the discourse of American popular

² Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 9.

culture and public culture. To unpack the terms of this subtle and politic effort, my main research question asks, how did the figure of the diva negotiate tensions in the American context between, on one hand, pastoral sentimentality and skepticism toward the modern world (technology, industry), and, on the other hand, the artificial character of the diva? The diva's relationship to naturalness and artifice in public culture presents compelling issues, offering a unique case study for considering the role that the cultural production of sentimental pastoralism played in negotiating the tensions of the modernizing world.

Marx identifies roughly 1840--1860 as the "take off" point for the "great watershed in the life of modern societies,"³ a time when "old blocks and resistances to steady development are overcome and the forces of economic progress 'expand and come to dominate the society.'"⁴ The "take off" was at its peak in 1844 with the "tension between the two systems of value" of sentimentalism versus modern society.⁵ In 1850 in the middle of the "take off," the trajectory of the diva starting with Jenny Lind continued with two other divas discussed in the dissertation, Adelina Patti and Geraldine Farrar. From 1850—1923, Lind, Patti, and Farrar were held together by the tension between sentimentalism and modern society through the collective American discursive located with public culture, mass culture, and popular culture.

When Jenny Lind sang, the public's enthusiasm grew to feverous heights including an unshakable consensus that the diva's voice could somehow create unity amongst some of the most polemical socio-political conflicts of American history. Lauren

³ Ibid., 26.

⁴ Ibid., 26–27.

⁵ Ibid., 27.

Berlant describes this effect as, “National Symbolic . . . the order of discursive practices whose reign within a national space . . . transforms individuals into subjects of a collectively held history.”⁶ The contradictions of Lind’s era spanned America’s obsessions from art to technology, the pastoral to the mechanical, from religious salvation to scientific discovery, and finally from the Union with debates surrounding slavery and the discussion to change the constitution. Divas were white, elite, women performers whose privilege and exceptionalism, in association with their mastery of the premiere European art form, opera, afforded their visibility and voice on and off stage as compared to women of color performers.⁷ The contradiction most appropriate for our purposes was the American fascination with nature and the pastoral as a theme in art and writing contrasted with Americans’ simultaneous captivation by new technologies and signs of industrial growth.⁸

The beginning of American modernity framed landscapes as “interrupted idyll,” appearing as the “locomotive, associated with fire, smoke, speed, iron, and noise, [a]s the

⁶ Lauren Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1991), 20.

⁷ Maureen D. Lee describes Sissieretta Joyner Jones or the “Black Patti” as an African American prima donna who was not allowed the same opportunities as the diva after whom she was nicknamed because of her race. While Adelina Patti, as a white woman, had the opportunity and privilege to appear on the premiere opera stages of Europe and the United States, Sissieretta Joyner Jones foraged a career with her own road company, the Black Patti Troubadours, later called the Black Patti Musical Comedy Company (Lee, ii). No recordings were made of the Black Patti, even though the technology was available in the latter part of her life (x). Jones had been referred to in the Barnumesque rhetoric once used for Jenny Lind as “The greatest singer of her race” (i). Maureen D. Lee, *Sissieretta Jones: “The Greatest Singer of Her Race,” 1868—1933* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2012).

⁸ Anne Rose, *Voices of the Marketplace: American Thought and Culture, 1830—1860* (New York: Maxwell Macmillian International, 1995), 163--165.

leading symbol of the new industrial power.”⁹ Prior to 1844, America was described as the “garden.” Metaphors of pastoral America appeared as early as “Captain Arthur Barlowe’s expedition in 1584 to establish Virginia and Sir Walter Raleigh’s expeditions in 1595 and 1617 that lead to founding Roanoke Colony, land and islands off of what is now North Carolina’s coast. Barlowe and Raleigh wrote about America as ‘an immense garden of ‘incredible abundance.’”¹⁰

Marx’s signal work, *The Machine in the Garden*, examines the complex compromise Americans made to have human-built “designs” of manufactured “nature” within ever-changing industrial and technological modern urban environments.¹¹ As a variation on and extension of the concept, *The Diva in the Garden* situates the diva as a “machine in the garden.” In this sense, she served as a “poetic metaphor” for the memory of nature found in the nostalgia evoked by her vocal repertoire, combined with the artifice of her technique from a relatively unknown style of operatic singing in 1850.¹²

To understand the terms of the discourse of American popular culture and public culture of how it relates to the diva, it is necessary to trace the origins of the figure of the diva. Opera¹³ and literature from early European modernity represented the diva as a “beautiful monster” whose charisma and virtuosic singing unified and adapted the eros and anxiety of technology. The diva appeared in the form of a succubus, at once exciting

⁹ Lowell Gallagher, “Jenny Lind and the Voice of America,” in *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, ed. Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 27.

¹⁰ Ibid., 37.

¹¹ Ibid., 70.

¹² Ibid., 43.

¹³ For example, the diva Olympia, an automaton in Offenbach’s operetta, *Tales of Hoffman*, humiliates the main character when he dedicates his love for her. Jacques Offenbach, *The Tales of Hoffmann* (New York: Penguin, 1982).

and terrorizing male protagonists. Her threat redoubled when modernity was embodied in her voice, conveying a fantastic, futuristic atmosphere. Take, for example, the diva in composer and critic Hector Berlioz's novella *Euphonia, or the Musical City*,¹⁴ which traced the diva's early engagement with popular culture, the pastoral, and modernity. *Euphonia*'s particular importance was located in the main male protagonist, Xilef, who constructed a fantastic story about the dangers of the diva's alluring voice and personality. The voice of the diva possessed a mysterious allure, ungraspable and evocative of a strong desire for female sexuality in the protagonist.

As a pastoral narrative, *Euphonia* strove to situate the diva within the nature/culture dialectic: as a woman of nature *and* an artist-professional of culture, including technology. The diva's fragmentation occurred within the pastoral themes of the diva as a woman of wilderness as primal inheritance, beasts, primitivism; of nature as civilization, and the control and discipline of the female body; and of culture, including technology and machines.

The diva in *Euphonia* first appeared as the male protagonist's innocent lover, Mina, and later embodied the devilish diva, Nadira. But a machine indiscriminately crushed both Mina and Nadira when it "turns on itself" and "rapidly shrinks," killing the two versions of the diva and making them shriek in a primal type of "singing." Here, the machine functioned as a metaphor of the destructiveness of the diva's "machine-like" feats of vocality and musicianship and her duplicity of multiple personae. Xilef tricked Nadira by having her trapped within a "steel pavilion" that would "roll in on themselves slowly and noiselessly"; simultaneously, Shetland, one of Nadira's lovers played a "huge

¹⁴ Hector Berlioz, "Twenty-Fifth Evening: Euphonia, or the Musical City," in *Evenings with the Orchestra*, ed. Jacques Barzun (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 295.

piano whose variegated sound was so powerful that under the fingers of a single virtuoso it could hold its own with the orchestra of a hundred players.”¹⁵ As the music’s tempo increased, the dancers—including the diva—continued to move within the pavilion until they became trapped and crushed to the death. “And the beautiful singer, the poetic fairy queen, feeling herself hemmed on all sides, pushes back around her with gestures and words of horrible bestiality, her low nature shown up by the fear of death and standing out in all its hideousness.”¹⁶ In this final passage, Berlioz reduced the diva’s voice from an object of progress to her primal nature as some sort of “beast.”¹⁷

Within Berlioz’s popular nineteenth-century story about divas, his pastoral narrative recurred with a larger popular narrative in which one considered the operatic voice produced from the female body. The larger, popular narrative of pastoralism thus presented intersecting anxieties about divas closer to the natural realm as desirous or maternal, as completely *of* nature and *separate from* culture as a type of monster, and as part of the modern social world as machines.

Drawing these threads together, this dissertation demonstrates that from mid-nineteenth-century to early-twentieth-century America, especially during American Victorianism, the publicly-displayed female body had to be meticulously controlled and patrolled, disciplined and—to be legitimated—formed into a moral object. The pastoral

¹⁵ Ibid., 292.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ In Chapter 5, with the work of Steven Connor, I describe divas’ voices as examples of “vocalic space,” as a process of “becoming space,” and as “becoming multiple selves.” I describe divas’ vocality in the dissertation as distinctly American as divas Jenny Lind and Adelina Patti in the nineteenth century had to perform a concert series (or in a concert style of performance) that required Europe-trained opera singers hybridize pastoral and popular repertoire with techniques of operatic singing. In turn, I describe in Chapter 4, Farrar who provided a new interpretation of Bizet’s role Carmen later in the early twentieth century as invigorated, extemporaneous, and, at times, shocking and violent. In Chapter 4, I also recount the significance of Willa Cather, a writer who lauded Farrar as an American singer forging a new tradition of performing opera Cather described as distinctly American.

aesthetic required that the female body be presented at the intersection of several criteria: (1) of *wilderness* or *wildness* as an uncontrolled woman, or signaled by primitivism; (2) productive of voice as part of *Nature*, as a cultivation of these instincts to make art, a civilized woman, and a properly-controlled and disciplined female body; and (3) part of *artifice*, this voice was part of culture, including technology, as the constrained, ordered female body that had morphed into the *machine*. Leo Marx describes this balance between natural environment and human design as the *garden* or the *middle space* that unites human-built environments and aspects of nature. But Marx also figures the *machine* as a figure of early-modern perceptions about industry and technology: as both progress and fear of these technologies surpassing human control.

For the diva, the American cultural symbol of pastoralism was partly created by such narratives as *Euphonia*. Here, her voice conjured notions of “wilderness,” the “pastoral sublime,” and the “primitive,”¹⁸ pastoral setting, such as the woods. However, with technology, anxiety derived from the dystopian fantasy of a modern future: the certain result of the decline of an Edenic pastoral with the arrival of railroads, pollution, and rising xenophobia.¹⁹

¹⁸ I use the terms primitive and primitivism in the pastoral sense stemming from the eighteenth-century definition referring to a philosophy about humans’ lineage with animals, and the “wilderness” of unexplored land of the Americas, not the twentieth-century modern art depiction, for example with the art of Picasso and African depictions. Leo Marx describes primitivism in alignment with pastoralism: “Both seem to recoil from the pain and responsibility of a complex civilization—the familiar impulse to withdraw from the city, locus of power and politics into nature. The difference is that the primitivist hero keeps going, as it were, so that eventually he locates value as far as possible, in space, or time or both, from organized society; the shepherd, on the other hand, seeks a resolution of the conflict between the opposed worlds of nature and art” (22). I go into more detail as to the definition of primitivism as it relates to pastoralism in Chapters 4 and 5. Marx, *Machine*, 22.

¹⁹ Marx explains “wilderness” in comparison with William Bradford’s description of the American coast while upon the Mayflower as “hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men” (41). These descriptions of wilderness as untamed, primitive, and uncivilized became ideological proof for United States’ colonization, development, and eventually movements of reform and “education” of lower classes and immigrants. Marx, *The Machine*, 41.

This tension between the natural and the artificial was part and parcel of larger cultural imbrications of technology and the city, on the one hand, and the natural world on the other. In 1850 America, the myth of the diva relied upon the tension between the wilderness of nature and urban technology, which became situated within the *sublime*. Vincent Mosco refers to the sublime as the dialectic of *sentimental* and *modern/complex pastoralism* as, “unlike beauty and love, which, according to Edmund Burke, transcend the banal through pleasure and identification, the sublime achieves transcendence through astonishment, awe, terror, and psychic distance.”²⁰ The sublime created a second paradox in the cultural roots of the diva that complemented the paradox of naturalness and artifice.

Divas were also bound up in a strange dialectical relation with their audiences. For example, Cowgill and Poriss argue that the diva was supposed to be simultaneously

Marx describes the modern terrain and technology in parallel to Hawthorne’s pastoral poem about the interruption of the steam-engine train upon the pastoral quiet of Sleepy Hollow: “‘busy men, citizens, from the hot street . . .’ The harsh noise evokes an image of intense, overheated, restless striving—a life of ‘all unquietness’ like that associated with great cities” (24). The “sublime” thus Marx explains as a modern, post-Enlightenment and Romantic “invest[ment in] the natural world with fresh mythopoeic value . . . It was not enough to call this newly discovered world beautiful; it was sublime” (96). The “sublime” then transitioned to “technological sublime” when “awe” of technology overtook that of nature, beginning with the train.

²⁰ In his article “The Two Marxes,” Vincent Mosco positions Leo Marx’s premise of culture and aesthetics (including technology) as a form of analysis for people to make meaning, and thus the sublime, as “genuine experience of meaningful transcendence”; with this, technology does not become reduced as Karl Marx asserted into a form of “banality” or as “false consciousness” (1). Rather, L. Marx explains that the sublime can be found within technology starting with the mid nineteenth century, and would thus replace the sublime’s association with nature in the late nineteenth century (15). In support of his theory, L. Marx split the sublime experience through the pastoral into two types: the “sentimental” and the “complex/modern,” despising the first as nostalgic and favoring the second as a productive transitional space. Vincent Mosco, “The Two Marxes: Bridging the Political Economy/Technology and Culture Divide,” in *The International Encyclopedia of Media Studies Volume 1*, ed. Angharad N. Valdivia (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). For other sources on the technological sublime, see Vincent Mosco, *The Digital Sublime: Myth, Power, and Cyberspace* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004) and David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1994).

“fantastic and horrible.”²¹ Entering popular vernacular in the nineteenth century, when women performers of opera were at the height of their careers, “diva” signified a woman who was not quite human, indeed, a goddess or fantastic being who could easily transcend the ordinary; while doing so, she was supported by an audience and fan-base that would move with her to higher grounds, to a place of complete rapture.²² In the nineteenth century, the opera community in Europe and America on the one hand tolerated the prima donna’s bad behavior because of her box office sales, her command of musical artistry, and her large following; and on the other, they were bizarrely fascinated by her personality and behavior as capricious, demanding, and extravagant.

From 1850–1923, divas had to carefully manage their relationship with naturalness in order to establish their affiliation or attribution to modern culture (including technology). Divas also had to manage their relationship with technology. Between 1850—1923, forms of technology included newspapers and cheap, mass-printing presses (beginning in the 1820s, 1830s),²³ commercial recording (beginning in 1889),²⁴ and commercial feature-length silent film (beginning 1910s).²⁵ Divas within

²¹ Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss, eds., *The Art of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), xxxv.

²² Ibid., xxxiii.

²³ Beginning in the 1820s and 1830s, newspapers, journals, and mass printing presses came about from “machine-made paper, faster presses, growing literacy, and industrial expansion.” Alfred McClung Lee, *The Daily Newspaper in America* (New York: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 2000), 63—64.

²⁴ Early recording in America began with Thomas Edison’s “phono-graph” in 1877 (13). The “gramophone” was patented in 1887, and commercial recordings weren’t produced until 1889 (14). Timothy D. Taylor, Mark Katz, and Tony Grajeda, *Music, Sound, and Technology in America: A Documentary History of Early Phonograph, Cinema, and Radio* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2012), 13, 14.

²⁵ Silent film also began with Edison with one of the first female lead films, *Carmencita* in 1894 (22), on to the kinetoscope, a device which allowed individual viewers to look through peepholes and see a selection of short films for a quarter (2); in the 1910s, nickelodeons gave way to feature-length theatres showing silent films (227). Ben Brewster, “Traffic in Souls (1913): An Experiment in Feature-Length

modern or complex pastoralism integrated nostalgic feelings for the past with the present or “future” state of technology; this included civilization and the changes that attended the modern era. To appreciate the articulation of nostalgia, divas, pastoralism, and technology, it is necessary to ask about the brief history of sentimentalism.

The Role of Sentimentality and Pastoralism in Cultural Production and Negotiating the Modern World

Sentimentality is the tradition of eighteenth-century sympathy.¹⁴ Robert C. Solomon explains sentiment from our current contemporary understanding as “surely not enough to construct wise policies, and what is often called ‘sentimentality’ would sometimes seem to be the very opposite of wisdom. Rationality encourages debate, precision, and hardheadedness, while sentimentality seems to encourage ad hominem argument and some notoriously ‘soft’ thinking.”²⁶ However, in the eighteenth century, through to the nineteenth century, sentimentality not only took on different, more adaptable meanings that included pastoral themes of naturalness, as well as emotion, feeling, and empathy, but also enabled discourses about industrialization, progress, and technology as becoming part of the sentimental landscape.

In the eighteenth century, a more progressive stance came from Adam Smith’s theory of moral sentiments as “an agreement of emotion;” however, Solomon avers, “he does not thereby imply the agreement of any particular emotion or kind of emotion.”²⁷ As

Narrative Construction,” in *The Silent Cinema Reader*, ed. Lee Grieveson and Peter Krämer (New York: Routledge, 2004), 227; Lee Grieveson and Peter Krämer, introduction to *The Silent Cinema Reader*, ed. Lee Grieveson and Peter Krämer (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 2; Charles Musser, “At the Beginning: Motion Picture Production, Representation and Ideology at the Edison and Lumiere Companies,” in *The Silent Cinema Reader*, ed. Lee Grieveson and Peter Krämer (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 22.

²⁶ Robert C. Solomon, *In Defense of Sentimentality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 51.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

such, sympathy is not “actually a sentiment at all but rather a vehicle for understanding other people’s sentiments,” as an empathetic ““fellow-feeling with any passion whatever.””²⁸ Rebecca Bechtold explains that sympathy, according to Smith, is “an emotional and philosophical ethos that celebrates human connection.”²⁹ Smith, for his part, described the purpose of sympathy as allowing the larger public to use its imaginations for putting oneself in the place of another as “a principle which interests [one] in the fortune of others.”³⁰ Smith’s articulation of the naturalness of feeling, emotion, and empathy of sympathy, mixed with imagining, and perhaps even becoming envious of, the artifice of another’s possessions and achievements, was part and parcel of the strategies of the diva to navigate her use of sentimentality to access cultural spaces.

Bechtoldt situates sentimentality within the music, media, and literature that helped define the sentimental woman that mid-nineteenth-century divas—such as Jenny Lind—implemented to configure their own legitimacy in public culture. For example, Bechtoldt explains that Jenny Lind sang Maurice Strakosch’s “The Echo Song” and M. Taubert’s “The Bird Song” in the style of mimicry,³¹ as a virtuosic prima donna who used an ornamented style of operatic singing, pairing the sentimental pastoral repertoire with the artifice of her technique. While the sentimental woman might have been closely

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Rebeccah Bechtold, ““She Sings a Stamp of Originality”: Sentimental Mimicry in Jenny Lind’s American Tour,” *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 58, no. 4 (2012): 499.

³⁰ Solomon, *In Defense*, 51.

³¹ Mimesis is implemented in this dissertation as a performance that, when figured through pastoralism, becomes the difference between repetition of vocality, speech, gesture, or movement as primitive instinct, as compared to artistic choice, as the cultivated, practiced, and purposeful performance, that has a transformative potential. In Chapter 5, I give a detailed description of Lind’s performance of the echo and ventriloquism as mimesis and mimicry. Mimicry, then is the exaggeration of a mimetic gesture in order to overwhelm it.

associated with Lind's choice of repertoire—two simple, pastoral ballads—Lind dressed them up with the operatic vocal technique she had learned in Europe to both complicate and modernize the sentimental woman. Lind's sentimental woman sang to promote her femininity with the lyrical meaning of the pastoral ballad's description of nature, natural landscapes, and gentle animals as birds, while showcasing the technique that would impart her passage back-and-forth between pastoral and technological spaces. Despite her entrance and success in the otherwise predominantly masculine, male-dominated fields of cultural production, the diva also showcased her status as a good, sentimental woman, as *Godey's Lady Book* described, with “an inward purity and taste, and a true sense of what is right, all exhibiting themselves in their natural external expression.”³²

Divas negotiated public expectations for feminine domesticity by employing a rhetoric of alignment with nature. Public expectation was generated through a particular American and European aesthetic popular in the nineteenth century. At stake was a particularly romantic concern with the inner world of the performer. Sentimental women derived inspiration from nature, accompanied by an internal contemplativeness that came from their relationship with domestic spaces as part of their developed “inner world” because, as Russel B. Nye explains, “it is mind only which can exhibit the highest beauty” and “in the hearts of men.”³³ The sentimental woman's inner world then was based on the intimacy of “viewer and viewed, between artist and material, for it was the artist's imagination that gave life to the object by relating it to the life of the beholder.”³⁴

³² Bechtold, ““She Sings,”” 499; T. S. Arthur, “Gentility,” *Godey's Lady's Book, and Ladies' American Magazine*, June 22, 1841, 268, accessed March 15, 2017, <http://www.proquest.com>.

³³ Russel B. Nye, *Society and Culture in America: 1830–1860* (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1974), 74.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 74–75.

As Hegel posited, “The inner world is the content of Romantic art, and the artist penetrated into it not by the head, but by the heart.”³⁵ For divas, the Romanticist aesthetic necessitated that standards be in accordance with selective, cultivated, and inherently classed aspects of nature as the most basic form of sentimental pastoralism.

Diva as Pastoral Mediator and the Middle Space

From the mid nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, a nostalgic middle space arose between sentimental pastoralism and modern or complex pastoralism. Marx asserts that sentimental pastoralism was part of early American ideology of the new land of opportunity, and lush scenery as utopian and idyllic habitation.³⁶ The diva within modern or complex pastoralism thus integrated nostalgic feelings for the past with the present or future state of technology, civilization, and the changes that came with the modern era. For the diva, thus, the pastoral figured as a “beautiful relation” between environments long considered to be polar opposites: the country and the city, nature and technology.³⁷ However, contextually, the pastoral framing of the diva was also fraught with tension about her work, necessitating her high visibility, and high measures of social and economic success. The middle space of the garden as a cultivated agrarian space, a “sentimental pastoral” carved out by man within the “wilderness” of the woods, was “interrupted” by or in some cases “incorporated” into the “machine” of trains, clock towers, or any other sound or element from civilization and city life, to form the modern/complex, pastoral middle space.³⁸

³⁵ Ibid., 75.

³⁶ Marx, *Machine*, 40.

³⁷ Ibid., 99.

³⁸ Ibid., 140.

After industry and technology had invaded, the garden of the nineteenth century became a sentimental remnant of pastoralism in the modern city. Thomas Jefferson, something of a philosopher of the pastoral,³⁹ influenced contemporary conceptualizations of the garden. To Jefferson, the garden reflected notions of “the Enlightenment . . . the widespread tendency to invoke Nature as a universal norm; the continuing dialogue of the political philosophers about the condition of man in a ‘state of nature’; and the simultaneous upsurge of radical primitivism . . . on the one hand, and the doctrines of perfectibility and progress on the other.”⁴⁰ The “garden” thus became part of the “preoccupations of the age: the landscape, agriculture, and the general notion of the ‘middle state’ as the desirable, or at any rate the best attainable human condition.”⁴¹ Drawing upon this alliance between a pastoral repertoire and the artificial, divas occupied a nostalgic middle space necessary to hinge together sentimental pastoralism and modern, or complex pastoralism.

It is from her entrance into popular usage where I pick up on the diva narrative as a comprehensive study. Divas were female artists whose fame—and thus ability to enjoy large profits—transported them from the exclusive realm of the classical arts to a mass-marketed, mass-produced, and technologically-enhanced commodity. Divas were thus caught up in the tension between their natural immediacy⁴² as women and the artifice of their technique, skill, and work of operatic voice. To merge these contradictions in their

³⁹ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers 1964).

⁴⁰ Marx, *Machine*, 87.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Luce Irigaray, *I Love to You*, trans. Alison Martin (New York: Routledge, 1996), 21.

public image as explained earlier beginning with Berlioz's novella, *Euphonia*, a mixed beauty or aesthetic was attributed to divas. They were seen simultaneously as *saints* and *monsters*.

With the contrast of divas as monsters or saints, mothers or machines, divas created art differently than celebrities, as those from classical Hollywood have been described. The beauty of divas came from their contradiction and the intense emotions that arose from desire and complex longing for them. Whereas the beauty of celebrities came from images reproduced as straightforward cultural symbols derived from different aspects of the individual. As saint or monster, for example, the diva's subject position was distinctly gendered or sexuated causing the diva to contend with contrasting personae. However, for the celebrity, as Richard Dyer explains, "Stars are involved in making themselves into commodities; they are both labour and the thing that labour produces."⁴³ Stars or celebrities of classical Hollywood, as described by Dyer, carried the economy of cultural symbols as more straightforward associations with idealized personalities. For example, Dyer describes Marilyn Monroe as a cultural symbol of "female sexuality" from the 1950s,⁴⁴ whereas Paul Robeson is of "black stardom" (through the eyes of white audiences),⁴⁵ and Judy Garland is an icon of "gay male subculture after 1950."⁴⁶ Described as revealing cultural symbols with overarching themes of identity, gender, sexuality, and race, such stars had been put through the

⁴³ Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 5.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 17—19.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 64—67.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 139.

machine of the corporate film industries for “profit” to sell themselves, films, and other goods as “newspapers and magazines . . . toiletries, fashions, cars . . .” Dyer explains.⁴⁷

As a condensation of concealment, the diva’s transformation extended beyond the outside influence of the publicity machine of opera and early Hollywood (although they were certainly also part of publicity campaigns, too). Divas acted within condensation of concealment or went to great lengths to conceal their massive accumulation of wealth and success as women through acceptable tropes of femininity. These tropes of femininity, whether holy or profane, created an elaborate masquerade of domestic or pastoral personae to make palatable to the public, modern working women, and the urban spaces that housed their flourishing. I continue to explain how the diva cultivated her condensation of concealment through the natural and technological sublimines.

The sublime, a pastoral concept to explain the “awe” experienced from being in nature, also redounded upon the diva.⁴⁸ Vincent Mosco and Richard Nye both interpret Marx’s writings on the pastoral as a tracing of modernity’s progress: when the experience of the sublime transferred from “awe” of nature to “awe” of technology.⁴⁹ For example, while the train was a symbol of pending industrialization in 1850, during Jenny Lind’s America tour, by the late nineteenth century, the train had appropriated the symbol of the “sublime” from natural surroundings to a marvel of technological innovation.⁵⁰ The railroad proliferated between the pre–Civil War era of Lind and the late nineteenth-

⁴⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁸ Mosco, “Two Marxes,” 16; Nye, *American Technological*, 58.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ The railroad was first built in 1828, “when Baltimore celebrated the construction of the first railway” and then progressed in 1869 “when most of the nation celebrated the completion of the first transcontinental railway.” Nye, *American Technological*, 45–46.

century of the prima donna, Adelina Patti, and thereby served as a “pivot of the transportation revolution which in turn quickened industrialization” and transportation for increased mobility.⁵¹

Culture and technology, two different framings of the diva, became part and parcel of the woman artist’s transition to the modern, social world. Culture was the diva’s entrance into urban spaces, leaving the confines of the private sphere and entering the public sphere as a working woman. The diva thus accomplished this transition--from nature to culture--as a cultural producer through the artifice of operatic singing. The public associated the diva’s singing technique as having the technological force of trains, guns, and other machines. These associations with her female body as machines also helped the diva separate from the private sphere. She became a modern woman articulating discourses of progress and technology into *technologies*. The diva activated her relationship with technology through *technologies* as the accomplishment of her enhanced body with voice. In fact, the diva becoming *woman* through the transformation of her female body through the processes of learning to sing operatically, singing professionally, and finally becoming a diva, marked her accomplishment. However, the diva’s accomplishment was also potentially marred by discourses of the pastoral and technological sublime. If not considered carefully as embodied and materialized through her singing as accomplishment, the diva also ran the risk of naturalizing nature itself as well as technology, to merely transfer “awe” of nature to her female body, to her technologically enhanced body. This next section goes into detail about the risks of

⁵¹ Marx, *Machine*, 180.

describing the diva as *woman* or as *feminine* through the pastoral and technological sublimes.

Thus, the technological sublime also became embedded in discourses on the diva as an alliance of artifice and technology. Joanna Zylinska explains the technological sublime as “a particularly useful concept when it comes to describing the fears, anxieties and fascinations connected with the technological age. This sense of simultaneous confusion and enlightenment, [provokes] the contradictory feeling of frailty and elevation.”⁵² While Zylinska describes the feminine⁵³ as an aspect of the technological sublime, that was once considered primarily closer to nature, she explains she uses it to “open itself up to an incalculable difference which threatens the stability and self-sufficiency of the modern subject.”⁵⁴ The feminine and the sublime share tropology and act as terms that rely upon intense experiences—the dialectic of bliss/horror of the sublime, and the empty sign of the feminine—to characterize the disruption of a cohesive, modern subject.⁵⁵ The error of these other texts, however, is the refusal to

⁵² Joanna Zylinska, *On Spiders, Cyborgs, and Being Scared: The Feminine and the Sublime* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2001), 2.

⁵³ Although Zylinska invests an ontological value in the “feminine” in conjunction with the sublime as “the material experience of femininity as a starting point,” she also claims “it is not to be an exclusive practice reserved just for women” (35). Rather, she also evokes the feminine in the *l'écriture féminine* as “a sign of the recognition of the excess and irreducibility which are experienced in the self’s encounter with otherness” (35).

As I use the word feminine in this dissertation, I differ from Zylinska’s definition of feminine in relation to “femininity” and “sexual difference” and a variety of other terms to infer women’s identity as an empty sign. Rather, I refer to the “feminine” as a quality of singing historicized with the diva with the soprano voice type. The “feminine,” then, is not an “empty sign” and it is not an essentialist category. Rather, it is an embodiment and materialization of the diva’s work, skill, and mastery of operatic singing, as both her participation of artifice, and productive of the effect of transcendence and immateriality (which I describe in detail in Chapter 5).

⁵⁴ Zylinska, *On Spiders*, 4.

⁵⁵ Barbara Claire Freeman’s book explains feminine sublime as “the female subject’s encounter to an alterity that exceeds, limits, and defines her.” Barbara Claire Freeman, *The Feminine Sublime: Gender and Excess in Women’s Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 2.

materialize⁵⁶ the feminine and the sublime through the activity of a modern woman subject, such as the diva. Contrary to Zylinska's description of the feminine and sublime as that which deconstructs the modern subject, with the diva in the garden as the machine, the feminine helped materialize the modern subject, as herself, other prima donnas, and other working women, through her singing. Although her singing provoked the sublime as an intense experience of bliss/horror, with the technological sublime, the diva was able to materialize her work through her female body as productive and part of culture, technology, and modernity—therefore also materializing the feminine. This work, however, began before the diva vocalized operatically, starting with the ways in which women—as aggrandized, feminine, divine, and valorized—were once valued in Western culture, beginning in the fourteenth century.

As a pastoral mediator, *diva* is a term that was introduced as early as the fourteenth century beginning with religious and mythological symbols of women's divinity as feminine supernatural beings.⁵⁷ J.Q. Davies figures such a historical diva in

⁵⁶ Elizabeth Grosz explains the processes of the body becoming materialized as the process of animation that has similarities with ways divas go through a process of embodiment, training, and skill with voice lessons for operatic singing to become modern subjects and to enter modern forms of subjectivities, work, and agency (to transition from nonworking, non-singer, professional woman singer, to successful woman diva/celebrity). Grosz explains, "Human bodies, indeed all animate bodies, stretch and extend the notion of physicality that dominated the physical sciences, for animate bodies are objects necessarily different from objects; they are materialities that are uncontainable in any physicalist terms alone. If bodies are objects or things, they are like no others, for they are the centers of perspective, insight, reflection, desire, agency." Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994), xi.

⁵⁷ The diva's etymology is "Italian diva goddess" or in Latin, "diva goddess, feminine of divus divine, god deity." "diva, n," *OED Online*, December 2016, Oxford University Press, accessed January 31, 2017, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/56006?redirectedFrom=diva&>.

Rachel Cowgill and Hillary Poriss address common confusion of the two words "'prima donna' and 'diva' [that] could be assumed to be synonymous, to both signify who perform leading roles in operatic works, and—one can push even further—a female singer of high repute and immense popularity" (xxxii). However, the difference stems on the term "diva" that arose far earlier than the "prima donna," the former originally used to signify a supernatural entity or goddess, the latter of which arose in the mid-seventeenth century as "a neutral term derived from the mundane, contractual necessity for impresarios of Italian opera to distinguish between leading ladies and other female members of the cast" (xxxii). The "diva" however as

comparison to an event with the early-nineteenth-century prima donna, Maria Malibran, described by the poet and correspondent of Théophile Gautier, Ernest Legouv  .

According to Legouv  , during a nighttime walk with friends, Maria Malibran spontaneously climbed to the foot of a platform that was situated high up behind a large fountain to evoke Diana and sang “Casta Diva” from Vincenzo Bellini’s opera, *Norma*. The scene evoked for Davies, the confluence of Maria Malibran in the eyes of Legouv   as the role Diana herself, as a High Priestess of the Druids, and as a “mythological deity.”⁵⁸ Like pastoralism, divas originated as objects of the imagination of others. The pastoral was fantasized as an untouched, natural beauty remote from the demands and disparity that so often attended city life. Divas shored up this fantasy of the pastoral by playing into early modern imagination about women in positions of control and progress as part of this idyllic landscape. Divas thus were first envisaged as a possible salvation from the errors of human nature and early modern living.

In the fourteenth century, the word diva exemplified cultural fiction, art, and religious myth, as “Roman goddesses, Grecian divinities, Christian martyrs, pagan

the famous woman opera singer from the early-nineteenth century “arose more gradually and, perhaps not surprisingly, during the period in which the power of these performers was solidifying across the operatic spectrum” (xxxii).

I use both “diva” and “prima donna” when appropriate, because as Cowgill and Poriss also point out from their engagement with *OED*, “While the first is confined to those engaged in the procession of singing, the second is utterly limitless” (xxxiii). Diva, then signifies not just a performer, but also the popular icon and pastoral figure, that reaches back to fourteenth-century Italy, and forward into the mid-nineteenth-century—early-twentieth-century Europe and America. As such, the diva holds the symbolic potential to also engage the dialectics of pastoralism, technology, and sexuate difference, in which the prima donna as an actual person could not. For additional discussions about the diva in how it relates/contrasts to the prima donna, see Cowgill and Poriss, *The Arts of the Prima Donna*, xxxii–xxxv.

⁵⁸ J. Q. Davies, “Gautier’s ‘Diva’ The First French Uses of the Word,” in *The Art of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 125.

priestesses, Madonnas, maiden saints, and miracle workers.”⁵⁹ Pastoral femininity deemphasized the body, casting women as ethereal and primarily spiritual. This discourse deemphasized the female as body—with all the varied primal symbols that made her female, such as menstrual blood and childbirth⁶⁰—and instead emphasized the qualities of ephemerality and transcendence of the diva’s goddess status: good deeds, spiritualism, and a saintly image. The diva substituted her female body, associated with excess, abjection, even the grotesque,⁶¹ using the feminine divine or altruistic social roles to distance herself from the stigmas of her female body when circulating in public space.

The diva, “at least since the 14th century” in Italy, had wider meanings as “‘goddess,’ ‘beautiful woman,’ ‘inamortata’ or ‘mistress.’” Davies explains that women singers have “been described under this not-so-specifically-operatic designation for centuries.”⁶² Between these ancient definitions, and the nineteenth-century derivations, divas were at a crossroads of the heavens, imagination, and the *wilderness* or *wildness* of female sexuality. Divas, thus, in the fourteenth century, were categorized figures of religious rites and worship—as “goddess[es],” respected women of adoration; as muses,

⁵⁹ Ibid., 126.

⁶⁰ Elizabeth Grosz describes “misogynist thought” in terms of the sort of reduction of women to the historical representation of the specificity of their bodies as “female” as a “convenient self-justification for women’s secondary social positions by containing them within bodies that are presented, even constructed, as frail, imperfect, unruly, and unreliable, subject to various intrusions which are not under conscious control.” Grosz includes “female sexuality” and “women’s powers of reproduction [including the menstrual cycle] are the defining (cultural) characteristics of women, and, at the same time, these very functions render women vulnerable, in need of protection or special treatment, as variously prescribed by patriarchy.” Grosz, *Volatile*, 13–14.

⁶¹ Rather than being as Russo describes the grotesque female body as the “the open, protruding, extended, secreting body, the body of becoming, process, and change,” the early diva is associated with heavenly, charitable acts or being as feminine divine. “The grotesque is opposed to the classical body, which is monumental, static, closed, and sleek, corresponding to the aspirations of bourgeois individualism.” Mary Russo, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess, and Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 62, 63.

⁶² Davies, “Gautier’s,” 126.

the “beautiful wom[en]”; and, finally, as women of ill repute and stigma, “inamortata,” and “mistress[es],” synonymous with “prostitute[s].”⁶³ In the nineteenth century, divas were described, as Davies explains with Adelina Patti and Guiditta Pasta, as celebrities, working women, combined with earlier derivations of the profane and sacred. A German journal *Deutsches Fremdwörterbuch* described Patti with the earliest German use of the word as “‘gefeierte Sängerin’ (acclaimed [female] singer) to 1866.”⁶⁴ Earlier on in December 1826, Guiditta Pasta was called by the *petit Courier des dames* ‘la Diva, l’Adorata [the Diva, the, Adored] as they called her in Paris.’⁶⁵

As a segue between the fourteenth-century and nineteenth-century derivations, the term diva resurfaced in eighteenth-century opera librettos to refer to neoclassical women archetypes as “vestal virgins.”⁶⁶ In contrast, from the 1720s assessments of Handel,⁶⁷ the German composer described real life divas such as Faustina Bordoni as difficult and a “troublemaker.”⁶⁸ In the eighteenth century, Handel experienced first-hand the most notoriously temperamental diva, Francesca Cuzzoni—whom he evidently threatened to

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Davies, “Gautier’s,” 126; Hans Schulz, Otto Basler, and Gerhard Strauss, eds., *Deutsches Fremdwörterbuch, Volume 4* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 775.

⁶⁵ Davies, “Gautier’s,” 126; Jean Mongredien, ed., *Le Théâtre-Italien de Paris (1801—1831): Chronologie et documents, Volume 6*. (Lyon: Symetrie, 2008), 734.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Suzanne Aspden describes Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustine Bordoni as soprano rivals who rose to fame in the 1720s, and “became notorious rivals in London between 1726 and 1728.” Aspden goes on to explain how Cuzzoni’s and Bordoni’s rivalry as two divas with whom Handel worked, and who also affected his working relationship with his leading singers, caused him to compromise his own compositions to meet their need to outshine the other. Suzanne Aspden, *The Rival Sirens: Performance and Identity on Handel’s Operatic Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1.

⁶⁸ Aspden, *Rival Sirens*, 49.

throw out of the window when she refused to sing an aria in *Ottone*.⁶⁹ Nineteenth-century high-profile female opera singers' participation with opera was not just as performers, but also as talented artists because they actively changed compositions and “created roles” with composers. Starting with Handel and continuing to the nineteenth century when demand was high, divas and prima donnas began to take on the image of being difficult, arrogant, demanding, and infuriating to work with. Thus, the battle began between the ways others perceived of divas as natural women controlled by the impulses, moods, and emotions of their female bodies; after having formal training with male vocal masters, they were also depicted especially as classed, properly behaved, and controlled women; finally, divas were received as modern subjects, capable and talented artists or masters of the artifice of opera—or as artifice itself, as machines.

When the opera market expanded in Italy, spreading throughout Europe, prima donna assolutas took advantage of multiple opera venues and the lack of supply of opera singers by performing multiple roles, sometimes three in one week in different vocal fachs (voice types) to keep up with the demand.⁷⁰ As I describe in Chapters 2 and 3, in the United States, because of the lack of exposure to opera, early mid-nineteenth-century opera singers such as Jenny Lind took part in concert series, not full operas, that used

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Geoffrey S. Riggs explains prima donnas who carried the assoluta voice as not contained to one “fach” or voice “category” but as having a “fundamental variety.” Riggs considers the terms to embrace the singers as well as “roles like Medee, Lady Macbeth, Norma, and so on, [to] transcend traditional bounds of mezzo, dramatic, and coloratura.” Also, he explains, “My designation of assoluta pure and simple, but for the roles themselves and for those special singers who can truly do them justice.” Geoffrey S. Riggs, *The Assoluta Voice in Opera, 1797–1847* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2003), 7.

Susan Rutherford writes about the period of “greatest freedom” for the prima donna that “occurred between approximately 1800–1840,” when they “influenced compositional practices; they determined musical and dramatic interpretation; and they affected management decisions about the running of the opera house, the content of the season, the employment and use of other artists, and so forth.” Susan Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera, 1815–1930* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 162.

their virtuosic voices of the bel canto style of singing to include some operatic arias and popular repertoire. The diva as a highly-celebrated female singer and/or artist with a cult following thus began to transcend the boundaries of opera. She soon included similar personae and giftedness from other art, performance, and entertainment venues, including popular repertoire, recording, and early silent film. In the next section, I use three case studies to explicate how divas entered popular culture. I also explain the dialectic of nature/culture and the three paradoxes of naturalness/artifice, the horrible/fantastic, and discipline/individualism.

Case Studies: Jenny Lind, Adelina Patti, and Geraldine Farrar

Divas, as pastoral mediators, used their singing, popular icon status, and multiple personae, to re-articulate and negotiate their status as modern working women in early-modern public culture. Training figured the diva as a product of artifice, moving her from the register of the romantic natural to the technological sublime. She also made gains with pastoral metaphors of wilderness or wildness, the garden, and the machine. Through these pastoral metaphors of the wilderness, the garden, and the machine, divas claimed a middle space to manage the intensity and confusion that was part of the public's experience of the sublime. Through this middle space, divas enacted a productive transition between these contradictions within the conjuncture of their era.

I begin with Jenny Lind, the first diva who reached high cultural and financial acclaim while she toured the United States from 1850--1852. She was one of the first divas to adopt the pastoral discourse with the metaphors particular to her Swedish heritage, and her effect of singing as a coloratura voice type earned her the nickname *Swedish Nightingale*. Lind was a singer-celebrity of the highest order. Although she was

known as the *virtuous diva*, her art touched on all dimensions of the pastoral contradiction of naturalness/artifice. In turn, she effectively strategized her own high visibility, fame, and status as a successful, modern woman through the persona of the saint and altruist. Lind's politic navigation revealed the multiple contradictions, paradoxes, and pastoral metaphors about the diva herself. While I have written to reveal contradicting perceptions about the diva—at times either to aggrandize her image or to defile a sentimental persona—Lind seemed to bypass the problematics of these contradictions through clever strategies and tactics.

For example, Lind negotiated the paradoxical tension between naturalness and artifice in a cohesive narrative through repertoire and singing. Lind's repertoire and technique relied on the transition from echo to ventriloquism. She performed two pastoral ballads, "The Echo Song" and "The Bird Song," as a pastoral figure. However, she showed her work, skill, and technique with the bel canto tradition of ornamenting songs to form her alliance with artifice by revealing the work of her vocal craft. In doing so, Lind used a vocal technique that produced an echo of nature by mimicking sounds of nature to those in the room. Audiences experienced Lind projecting sound from her body to make it appear as if it were coming from a different source. Lyrics that were all about nature, and pastoral recollection of animals, herdsman, and birds, somehow sanctified Lind's use of technique.

Adelina Patti continued this negotiation by mediating the persona of the *piano girl* while claiming a position as a *cosmopolitan diva*. The piano girl was a sentimental characterization of Victorian daughters who were forced to practice piano. Learning to play piano well was part of the Victorian young woman's allure for potential suitors. She

thus practiced and played piano as rehearsal for her future domestic role as wife and mother. At the same time, however, Patti claimed a space as a cosmopolitan, internationally famous diva with several different countries of origin.

“Home Sweet Home” was Patti’s signature song for the latter part of her career—the period on which I focus (1881–1904)—during her American tours. The song both symbolized the nostalgia of Patti’s voice when it was in its prime as a coloratura soprano (high soprano) and featured her as an aging diva in her current vocal range (focused on the middle-lower range of her voice). Patti, as the coloratura diva of the late nineteenth century thus came after the original opera singers, the musica (castrati),⁷¹ and then followed with the Primo Ottocento (early-nineteenth-century Romantic divas). Patti, thus took on both the rise and fall of the soprano voice which Michel Poizat called the “cry” as a “pure cry” of the “angel.”⁷² Through an empirical vocal training style, Patti was taught to follow the castrati’s, and Primo Ottocento diva’s extreme discipline and control to make the diva’s body into the perfect instrument to fulfill ideal notions of operatic voice. Instead, singing “Home Sweet Home” allowed Patti to feature the best notes and tone of the aged, middle-lower range of her voice, while creating a nostalgic feeling with audiences. Although in her youth, as a coloratura, she accessed the soprano voice—

⁷¹ Before a boy reached puberty—between the ages of six and twelve—an orchiectomy was performed that “severed the blood vessels that carried the hormones from the testes to the rest of the body (it did not actually remove the testes)” (28). Because of the surgery, physical characteristics of the castrati distinguished them from noncastrated males such as they “lacked secondary sexual characteristics such as facial and body hair and early baldness,” the Adam’s Apple, “and were more likely than ordinary males to grow to an unusual height” with a “disproportionately long arm and leg size relative to the torso size.” John Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera: The History of a Profession* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 33. See also Naomi André, *Voicing Gender: Castrati, Travesti, and the Second Woman in Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 18.

⁷² Michel Poizat, *The Angel’s Cry: Beyond the Pleasure Principle in Opera* (Ithaca: Cornell Press, 1992), 137.

otherwise known as the most “divine” range of the diva’s song—when she switched to “Home Sweet Home,” Patti was able to hold on to her reign as diva, as she kept the integrity of her artistry intact. Also, as the piano girl, Patti presented an adventurous woman who could calm crowds with her voice singing “Home Sweet Home.” As a cosmopolitan diva and Victorian woman with international duty to altruistic acts, Patti was able to negotiate her public’s desire to see her simultaneously as a domestic woman and successful, world-travelling diva.

With Geraldine Farrar, I continue my discussion of naturalness and artifice to describe how the diva took on characteristics of the *plucky girl* in two very different derivations. The first, was as a domesticated, outspoken, and active New England girl, who adopted aspects of *naturalness*. She was an otherwise curious and talented young woman who was allowed to leave her rural town for the city; however, when she came of marrying age, she was expected to return to a pastoral *home*. The second, was as a single, adventurous *girl-reporter* who displayed artifice partly because of her exploratory feats involved taming the natural world and mastering new technologies.

One of Farrar’s quintessential opera roles was Bizet’s *Carmen*, which she adapted to make relevant to the changing social situations of women in the early twentieth century. In her portrayal of *Carmen*, Farrar leveraged the plucky girl to offset the energy and extemporaneous performances of the Spanish gypsy lead. Whereas Patti’s performances were nostalgic of a pastoral home of the past, Farrar worked with the fluidity of changing modern gender roles for women. Farrar accomplished this shift through her modern characterizations of women roles in opera, interpreted as youthful and new to opera audiences.

Farrar's persona as plucky girl also manifested her as a New England white woman, and the whitening of Carmen as an opera role otherwise considered *exotic*. Along with Lind and Patti, Farrar was a diva who was read as *white* and who played into nationalistic symbols of her race to remind audiences of the appropriateness of her visibility in public culture despite being a woman. When Farrar performed as Carmen, she did so to try to tame the character's exoticism and non-white identity, to instead merge the wholesomeness of the plucky girl with the energy and violence of Carmen.

Here Farrar served as a liminal figure. By *liminality*, I refer to how Farrar's performances, intellect, authorship, and mass-media personae helped transition women from *nature* and domesticity to *culture* and the working world. Liminality thus situated Farrar as a diva when both the plucky girl and Carmen were found to occupy a liminal state fluid of time and space. This fluidity also situated Farrar as the diva "between town and country, between culture and nature, between civic and savage existence."⁷³ Farrar accomplished this by performing Carmen relatively free from the emphasis on voice by other divas using bel canto voice. Although Farrar was trained in bel canto, she chose, at times to break from reliance on *perfect* tone and voice to focus on physical action, movement, and shocking dramatic moments. These moments of responding to and causing violence with Carmen's role caused controversy and interest from early Hollywood. Farrar subsequently starred in an early silent film performing the same role.

Each of these three divas invented a persona against the backdrop of the fundamental conflict between sentimental affiliations and technological artifice. These divas confronted other paradoxes as well involving the fantastic and horrible and the

⁷³ Ninotchka Devorah Bennahum, *Carmen: A Gypsy Geography* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2013), 9.

sublime state of the diva. The fantastic and horrible paradox originated with the diva as *divine monster*, whose beauty and perfection of voice compelled audiences, opera house managers, and other musicians to tolerate or even become strangely fascinated by her bad behavior. As a result—such as with Patti—audiences still adored her, and opera house managers still booked her even though, as legend had it, the diva stood backstage without her shoes on until she was paid the exorbitant fee of \$5,000 before walking onto the stage.⁷⁴ Audiences had complex relationships with divas based on divas' split personae of divine and monster, fantastic and horrible. The sublime continued from the naturalness/artifice paradox. As people moved on from the “awe” of nature to the “awe” of technology,⁷⁵ the diva, too, shifted her cultural meaning from its associations with the pastoral to associations with the technological sublime.

For the third paradox, an extension of the basic nature/artifice paradox configured the diva squarely between individual expression and an exacting demand for vocal discipline. Lind most directly approached the first paradox of naturalness by assuming these qualities through her choice of repertoire and delivery of vocal technology and style. Whereas Lind's repertoire was comprised of pastorals from Sweden, her voice carried the artifice or the science of Manuel Garcia II's “vocal science” training. For example, Garcia's teachings referred to the diva's voice as a “mechanism” or a “vocal mechanism”—thus, the diva ran the risk of being reduced to a product of science.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Ethan Mordden, *Opera Anecdotes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 120.

⁷⁵ Vincent Mosco, “The Two Marxes: Bridging the Political Economy/Technology and Culture Divide,” in *The International Encyclopedia of Media Studies Volume 1*, ed. Angharad N. Valdivia (Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 16; David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1994), 58.

⁷⁶ Cornelius Reid, “Voice Science: An Evaluation,” *Australian Voice* 11 (2005): 2.

Patti's relationship to the paradox of individualism and discipline, thus, derived from the pressure that came with performing the coloratura voice type (as responsible for the most florid, difficult, and virtuosic opera repertoire). Patti could have fulfilled the fate of the coloratura or virtuosic diva by succumbing to the self-destructive myth fulfilled by so many other prima donnas—such as Maria Malibran and Maria Callas. The empirical method of vocal instruction supported a tragic fate for singers because it relied upon indefatigable physical training, which pushed prima donnas to the edge of sanity and health through the pressure (but lack of analytical explanation) to train for the *perfection* of sound. The empirical method, therefore, was in direct opposition to the analysis provided by science, which focused its instruction on anatomy. However, Patti defied these high expectations by allowing for her empirical “discipline” to work with and not against her manner of individualism. Foucault's “technologies of the self”⁷⁷ sheds light on Patti's methods as she learned to enact a degree of self-discipline in which she took care of her physical and mental needs as an aging diva.

Farrar's case was unique because she took lessons from Lilli Lehmann, a Wagnerian bel canto singer whose pedagogical style was informed by her intense discipline for the most strenuous and difficult roles in opera. However, Lilli Lehmann also understood an individual singer's process of learning how to sing. In this way, Lehmann's liberal modern approach supported each singer learning from his/her unique relationship to processes of singing (and not just as products of disciplines). Farrar was

⁷⁷ Foucault defines technologies of the self: “which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others . . . operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.” Michel Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Boston, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 18.

able to take Lehmann's liberal modern approach and forsake a strict discipline, creating a new style of performing opera.

Each diva had a relationship with altruism as part of her public persona as a woman artist and celebrity of her era. Hillary Poriss writes about the dynamics of the prima donna and altruism in the nineteenth century as reliant upon a triangulated relationship of prima donna, bourgeois audience/readership, and "beggar."⁷⁸ I describe altruism and the diva in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3 with Jenny Lind and Adelina Patti. In this dynamic, the diva was able to bring her "heavenly" gifts down to earth to bestow upon the neediest subjects. Such narratives appealed to the bourgeois, or middle class, sensibilities to "advance" the needy or to "educate" the lower classes. In turn, it gave the diva a certain caché to keep performing her art with relatively elite circles because she was also giving back to less fortunate audiences and people. As with pastoralism, altruism and the diva made a performer whose style wasn't always received as feminine to be considered softer, more maternal, and more of a giver. These qualities, attributed to altruism, thus made divas seem closer to their "nature" as sentimental women of their era.

Catherine Clément and other diva scholars critique that the diva typically died at the end of the opera. This tragedy occurred even though her persona, singing, and art evokes an unstoppable force of the sublime, pushing both the limits of the human body and the desire for her female sexuality.⁷⁹ Clément explains that although opera needs the

⁷⁸ Hillary Poriss, "Prima Donnas and the Performance of Altruism," in *The Art of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Hillary Poriss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 46—49.

⁷⁹ Catherine Clément, *Opera: The Undoing of Woman* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1988); Poizat, *Angel's Cry*.

prima donna, “on the opera stage women perpetually sing their eternal undoing.”⁸⁰ In this dissertation, I describe divas who created art to “perpetually sing their eternal undoing” through a series of paradoxes, of naturalness and artifice, the fantastic and the horrible, and the individual and discipline, within the framework of the nature/culture dialectic. Divas strategized the way they sang and presented themselves publicly to make sure they stayed legitimate in the eyes of American audiences. Their authenticity and value couldn’t solely be measured by their skill, their hard work, and/or their virtuosic musicianship. Rather, divas had to both perform at a very high level while appearing humble and domestic, and while supporting feminine and sentimental values.

By historicizing sentimental cultures, I believe we can look to divas to show us something specific about historical strategies for negotiating technology and culture. The divas in this dissertation, as high profile women in public culture, have used sentimentality to cover up their success. Indeed, sentimentality ended up negotiating a final, crucial paradox: the paradox of the successful woman. The nature/culture dialectic was specific to divas as women performers and cultural symbols. Modern subjecthood then included divas’ instinct to preserve their own life force by focusing equally on success as well-being and good health.

Conclusion

Luce Irigaray critiques Karl Marx for devising a philosophy of work and exploitation that neglected women’s active role. Irigaray paraphrases from Marx, who once asserted, “The most basic human exploitation lies in the division of labor between

⁸⁰ Clément, *Opera*, 5.

man and woman.”⁸¹ However, Marx shifted to a seemingly gender-neutral stance on love, labor, and history. Marx took his cues from Hegel based on “the question of love between the sexes which, notably, he analyzes as labor.”⁸² The diva might not have traditionally been associated with modernity and labor as she was dependent on love. In fact, I will argue that the diva accomplished precisely this association. Irigaray’s critique of both Marx and Hegel is that they neglected women’s modern subjecthood as separate from men’s. In turn, they failed to acknowledge the diva’s unique position within the specific identity of women’s bodies as part of sexuation.⁸³ The previous assumptions of women’s worth were evaluated through the female body and work as a mother or wife. By doing so, love casted women as being servants to men’s positionality in the modern social world, and a certain possessiveness of women’s image paralleled this structure. In

⁸¹ Irigaray, *I Love to You*, 19.

⁸² Ibid., 20.

⁸³ I choose to use “sexuation” and “sexuate difference” instead of sexual difference because my focus for divas is to write about how they were able to transition from natural to modern subject positions outside of their sexualities. Rather than sexuality, I focus on identifying the diva as sexuated as part of her participation with artifice, as her work, skill, and mastery of operatic singing, as a woman performer, to effectively map her passage from the assumption of her natural immediacy to her modern subjecthood as a successful working woman.

I consciously make the choice to use sexuation and sexuate difference because of a recent shift in feminist studies to focus less on women’s identification as reliant upon their sexuality because of the limitations of sexual acts for identity. Thus, sexuation is important for how I choose to describe divas who cultivated their singing, and how each diva chose practices of self-care, and not self-destruction, or destruction of the other through possessive love.

Irigaray writes about the difference between “sexual” and “sexuate,” as a possessive as compared to nonpossessive love, in her book *I Love to You*. Irigaray conceives of the “to” in *I Love to You* as a gift or a neutral, irreducible space of “difference” in sexuate difference, or a space of silence, listening, and breath held open for two (or more) people to communicate respectfully, and with an unconditional love, without invading, or feeling the need to possess the other. Irigaray, *I Love to You*.

Heidi Bostic, in “Luce Irigaray and Love,” also makes an eloquent distinction: of sexuate and sexual – in French is *sexue(e)* as compared to *sexuel(le)*: “The former term represents a way of trying to think sex/self without necessarily referring to sex/act. The use of *sexue(e)* to describe the human subject, then, is a gesture toward bracketing carnality while addressing identity.” Heidi Bostic, “Luce Irigaray and Love,” *Cultural Studies* 16 (2002): 606.

Chapter 5, I include Luce Irigaray's theoretical term, self-affection,⁸⁴ to apply to how the diva, as a sexuated woman performer, sang as part of vocalic space, but also to apply to a practice of self-care (a theme that recurs throughout the dissertation). Self-affection can also awaken sexuate difference, as a gift, a middle space, a breath, or neutral space that holds two (or more) people within it without invading the differences of the other. Divas, as I describe with practices of self-care, and specifically through the learning of operatic singing to figure themselves within the pastoral/technological middle space, evaded possessiveness associated with love, and instead, used love as a theme and practice to take care of themselves as well as others.

Divas strained against Marx's and Hegel's association of women and "natural immediacy"⁸⁵ with family. "Natural immediacy" is defined as modern women subjects only being able to move from nature to culture by deriving a pleasure from her dependence on a husband and a family. However, these divas strategically navigated sentimentalist and domestic personae, and modern gendered personae. Never settling on one, they fluctuated between both of these in exaggeration and contradiction, in order to produce a split in the dialectic which Hegel created and to which Marx conformed.

Some of the reason for the diva's falling out with the public over her relationship with technology or artifice involved her own control and disciplining of her body to produce voice. The public was both thrilled and repulsed by the diva's ability to manipulate her own body on stage in a public venue to produce something beautiful for audiences to enjoy. At the time, the social norm was for a woman to stay in the private

⁸⁴ Luce Irigaray, "The Return," in *Luce Irigaray: Teaching*, ed. Luce Irigaray and Mary Green (London: Continuum, 2008), 230.

⁸⁵ Irigaray, *I Love to You*, 21.

space of her home attending to domestic duties. A woman's affiliation with domesticity was not just considered a social expectation, but was "natural" and "right," with her own inheritance as a wife and mother (servant to her family) and with God.⁸⁶

Because of this expectation, I have honed in on the female body of the diva as part of the catalyst to make the shift from pre-modern to modern perceptions and the materialization of women in public culture. Pastoral ideology for mid-nineteenth-century to early-twentieth-century America posited divas as one with nature, naturalness, and the female body. Theories of sexuation and sexuate difference support the lively, and perhaps heated, debates that might arise to work through pastoral ideology. Although I mention modern gender primarily in Chapter 4, I do so because historically and contextually, Geraldine Farrar was part of the modern gender era of the New Woman, flappers, and suffragettes. However, it was divas' participation with the natural realm, through the reconfiguration of their female bodies through art that helped them as women to transition to the cultural realm that works well with a theoretical framing of sexuation and sexuate difference.

Divas in the United States from 1850–1923 may have partly assimilated their art and personae to domesticity and sentimentalism. However, if they assimilated, they did so to balance their roles as successful working women with their participation with artifice, modernity, and technology. Self-love, self-care, and a "singular pleasure" as modern working women therefore stood at the gateway of the diva's potential as her own

⁸⁶ Barbara Welter describes the traits of Victorian women as, "piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity . . . Put them all together and they spelled mother, daughter, sister, wife—woman." Andrew Roell explains some of Victorian women's most important gestures to be "moral" and "medicinal" to keep a Christian home. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood 1820–1860," in *Locating American Studies*, ed. Lucy Maddox (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1966), 44; Andrew Roell, "Piano in the American Home," in *The Arts and the American Home, 1890–1930*, ed. Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling (Nashville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 90.

symbol of historicity.⁸⁷ Rather than suffering or sacrificing for her art—precisely what Hegel makes of a woman’s historicity—the diva took pleasure in her work, and slowly began to reveal her artifice in the form of skill, training, and mastery of voice and acting. We can learn from divas’ practices that sexuation carries a potential to hold its own value aside from the one assigned to it from Hegelian dialectics or Marxist theory on labor and love. The culture of the diva, thus, as well as her relationship to technology, grants sexuation and women’s historicity, as potential modern subjects, more outlets to distance the diva from her natural immediacy.

⁸⁷ Irigaray, *I Love to You*, 25.

CHAPTER 2: THE DIVA IN THE GARDEN: JENNY LIND AS THE SWEDISH NIGHTINGALE

Jenny Lind, 1850s America, and the Sublime of the Diva

In September of 1850, the Swedish opera singer Jenny Lind electrified the American public with her first concert which included Vincenzo Bellini's aria from *Norma*, "Casta Diva." At the time, cultural and aesthetic fissures in the form of technology and various man-made environments were disrupting the prominent position of the *pastoral*, which had always invoked an awe of nature. Pastoralism exercised a powerful hold on the American imagination. Against the tides of rapid technological and social change, it offered nostalgic ties to the past—and, ultimately, to the land. The pastoral concern with naturalness (understood as the opposite of artifice) inflected American thought about popular culture. Indeed, American Romanticism held that what was natural—that is, what is inartistic, moral, and drawn from authentic experience—was diametrically opposed to what was artificial or, more specifically, the product of human work or technique.¹ In this configuration, the difference between a diva and a singer

¹ Russel B. Nye, *Society and Culture in America: 1830–1860* (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1974). Nye explains four aspects that an American Romanticist artist should have. (1) The artist should have the ability to "transform" and "interpret the truth he perceives . . . [while also being] disciplined by taste and judgment, for the creative power must harmonize with morality." (2) The artist should possess "genius' and charm," as Coleridge said, the former required "the heart" and "honest enthusiasm" (81). American genius, different from European genius, which was more libidinous, and it came from Yankee "hard work" and Calvinist discipline to construct "felicitous combination of mental faculties, moral qualities and physical organization" (*Society and Culture*, 8). (3) The artist should also be "true to nature," giving way to debate on exactly whose/which form of "nature?" Should the artist depict "evil" nature, and if so, will this imaginary carry spiritual repercussions? (4) Art was to be considered "highly subjective,

would have been reducible to the natural qualities of a singer's voice. As such, a debate was stirred about the qualities that constituted a diva and the provenance of the singer's vocal talent: was operatic singing best understood as an art of nature or as a product of technique?²

This commitment configured opera as important to perceiving American Romanticism as reliant upon a popular American aesthetic that valued artlessness, morality, and experience;³ this was compared to associating the diva with artifice, European Enlightenment, industrialization, progress, and/or the interruption of the machine.⁴ Only when Lind as the diva was able to transfer her sublime artistry of singing to the technological sublime could she transition between the wilderness of the natural terrain and the technology of built environments.

individually intuitive" and use "imagination as the power which 'evolves from material objects the latent spiritual meaning'" (Ibid.).

² Lowell Gallagher, "Jenny Lind and the Voice of America," in *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, ed. Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

³ Nye claims that although at first American Romanticism took its lead from Europe, the American variety set itself apart. American Romanticism warned artists of the "excesses of the European and British brand" (*Society and Culture*, 72). With the "restraints of Calvinistic culture, the respect for tradition and aversion to extremes characteristic of colonial society, and Yankee common sense," America focused on the "'moral charm,' 'moral propriety,' and 'earnestness and moral beauty' in art" (Ibid.). Also, the American version of Romanticism did not consider itself "a revolt against neoclassicism . . . [and was] less a reaction against something than the beginning of something new" (Ibid., 72–73).

⁴ Dan Edelstein explains Enlightenment on its own terms as its own form of "modernity . . . The great scientific and philosophical accomplishments of the seventeenth century . . . the Scientific Revolution—featured prominently in their defining narrative" (1). Although in the eighteenth century, "new philosophy" overtook many of the ideas of Enlightenment, the period was considered a type of "Golden Age" and most pertinent for our purposes—"when scholars contemplated nature for the first time" (2). Dan Edelstein, *The Enlightenment: A Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

Nye explains the Enlightenment as the "older concept of history," whereas Romanticism was the "newer" (101). He proposes that Enlightenment in nineteenth-century United States became "rationalist" in philosophy, as influenced by Locke, Bacon, and Descartes, and expanded upon by Fontelle, Vico, Hume, Biggon, Turgot, and Kant. In the nineteenth century, the idea of history became strictly scientific and rationalistic, and it "widened to embrace the study of societies and cultures as well as of church and state" (*Society and Culture*, 102).

Despite pastoral pretensions to rejecting artifice, Lind relied on a singing technique that was thoroughly bound up in her teacher Manuel Garcia's vision of a vocal science. Garcia's bel canto vocal pedagogy saw the natural, autonomic body as wild and uncontrolled, relying on breath, musculature, and posture. Garcia was the first vocal teacher to give lessons on bel canto through vocal science. Wayne Koestenbaum defines bel canto as literally "beautiful singing,"⁵ or the classical training of legato, florid, and virtuosic style of singing. Early on, bel canto female opera singers--who were beginning to be known as prima donna "virtuosas," assolutas, or, eventually, "la divina" or diva--were very rare. Thus, they became a coveted commodity within sixteenth- to eighteenth-century Italian royal courts, and then within public venues.⁶ By the time Garcia entered the Paris Conservatorie, the "Italian method of singing was well established[,] and the large, articulate, and well organized instruction manuals of Mengozzi and Garaude [both instructors of famous castrato singers] were firmly established."⁷ In 1840, Garcia presented a new, modern version of bel canto vocal pedagogy focused on vocal anatomy and physiology. With his concepts of vocal "mechanism/apparatus," he transformed the opera singer's body from an object of mystery to an "instrument" of science. Sharing these views, Garcia presented his paper, *Memoire of the Human Voice* to the Academy of Sciences in 1841. Thus emerged something paradoxical about Lind's avowed pastoralism: it was premised on a thoroughly modern vision of operatic performance as a product of scientific discipline.

⁵ Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire* (New York, De Capo Press, 2001), 158.

⁶ John Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 191.

⁷ Ibid., 4–5.

The notion that a trained bel canto voice was natural had become uncommon or considered outdated after Manuel Garcia the II's vocal science of the 1840s. Garcia attempted to focus on the anatomy, the physiology, and the discipline/control of a body to produce voice. With this knowledge or technology, the diva thus represented symbolic capital (as associated with the dominant and most acknowledged capital to society). She did so to claim her place above the structure of the genre's culture. Her performance was not formed as a part of the whole, but as one that rang out above and over the whole. The third paradox of individualism versus discipline was located in the vocal science episteme, which carried the potential to compete with the legitimacy of the diva's creativity, training, and investment in her body as a developing artist. Lind's "myth of the assoluta prima donna"⁸ as individualist and autonomous stood in tension with the patronage of vocal science. Also, although the diva appeared to be an emblem of autonomy and American individualism, behind her vocal feats were the socialization of her body and artistry.

Jenny Lind came to America as the virtuous diva. Her public commitments to philanthropy insulated her work against a lingering Jacksonian prejudice that saw opera as elitist. But Lind's work troubled popular culture's entrenched opinions of opera by more than just performing philanthropy: it drew heavily on a quintessentially American popular symbol of the time: American pastoralism. Lind sang about Sweden's idealized, natural landscapes. Her subject triggered for the public, American pastoralism,

⁸ Geoffrey S. Riggs defines "assoluta" as "a distinct category . . . both for a kind of singer and a kind of role . . . [that] transcend traditional bounds of mezzo, dramatic, and coloratura" (7). The vocal virtuosa of the prima donna assoluta, thus created the diva as a myth or cultural symbol of her era. Geoffrey S. Riggs, *The Assoluta Voice in Opera, 1797—1847* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2003).

specifically the vitality of American natural landscapes as compared to its built environment. Lind thus engaged America's sublime longing for the bucolic terrain outside of the city. But Lind's employment of an imagined pastoral America was neither straightforward nor uncomplicated, relying as it did on the transformation of the natural sublime to the technological sublime through her tendency to interpret her oeuvre in the classically trained bel canto tradition of singing. Lind effectively enacted this transition from the sublime to the technological sublime through the pastoral device of the middle space.

The Middle Space: Sentimental and Modern/Complex Pastoralism

As a diva, Jenny Lind was situated within the pastoral middle space. Known as the Swedish Nightingale, Lind's voice was frequently compared to the pastoral qualities of a bird. Also, her feats of vocal skill and virtuosity (otherwise considered unfeminine) were offset as belonging to nature because of her Swedish nationality as a natural genius. And, thus, Lind's singing served as a specialized pastoral aesthetic of Swedish pastoral landscapes while embodying the coldness, iciness, and the lushness of Swedish forests and waters. As the Swedish Nightingale, Lind was positioned in her country's pastoral landscapes through her half-bird, half-woman nickname.

Lind inhabited a contradiction between efforts to sentimentally connect her with nature (as songbird, as Swedish), and the technically sophisticated means of training that informed her practice. For some, Lind presented a simplistic repertoire, praiseworthy for its purity and feeling. Other audience members critiqued her work as ornamented

singing—among them the poet, Emily Dickinson,⁹ who believed Lind was “mimicking” a version of herself (or someone else) rather than just being authentic.

Dickinson’s problem with Lind might be more effectively illustrated by explicating the difference between natural and pastoral in relationship to the pastoral middle space. While the natural demands that art authentically reflect or mimic real objects in nature, the pastoral utilizes imaginative and creative frames between naturalness and artifice.

The difference between natural and pastoral was that the former held faith that *born* or *inherited* abilities/skills were attributed to some people over others, and that the latter came from the European tradition of arts and literature as reliant upon the romantic imagination of an untouched, fecund, utopian space. Later, the pastoral imagination of Europeans (exclusively from imagined spaces of literature, music, and art) was projected into American culture. Settlers then formed sentimental pastoralism, as compared to modern/complex pastoralism. While pastoralism was conceived of as an aesthetic hinging on naturalness and the artist’s relationship with nature, it was not the same as naturalness itself. Naturalness depended upon fixed, inert definitions of what was *true* and *authentic*, starting with nature, whereas pastoralism appreciated nature while questioning its *truths*. Thus, pastoralism was perception-based and interactive because of its commitment to imagination; its result hinged on the middle space between naturalness and artifice as produced by art. This potential for framing pastoralism as middle space between natural landscapes and human-built environments as a form of art transformed an otherwise

⁹ Rebecca Bechtold, “‘She Sings a Stamp of Originality’: Sentimental Mimicry in Jenny Lind’s American Tour,” *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 58, no. 4 (2012): 493–528; Emily Dickinson, “Dickinson to Austin Dickinson, 6 July 1851,” in *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, vol. 1, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), 120–121.

disorienting experience into a potentially aesthetic experience, and thereby helped orient people dealing with the new urban spaces of changing American landscapes.

The negative reaction to Lind's interpretation of pastoral song can be analyzed through the theoretical lens of sentimental pastoralism, defined as the idyllic separation of the pastoral from technology (or the *machine*). In an example of extreme criticism, *The New York Courier* contended Lind went so far outside the acceptable American aesthetic influenced by pastoralism that her singing was "too mechanical" and "feelingless."¹⁰ Positive reviews, then came from the complex/modern stage of pastoralism, in which the "machine" of Lind's voice was seen as highly-trained and controlled, interjected within a pastoral imagination. This intersection formed an integrated, modern image of the country paired with the bucolic, and industry coupled with technology.

Although P. T. Barnum promoted Lind as the "best opera singer in the world," in the end, Lind never actually sang a complete opera in the United States. Instead, during her concerts, she shared a famous passage from the Lutheran Bible, spoke on the beauty of a sunset to demonstrate her close connection to Nature, and then sang about the bucolic beauty of Sweden with a folksong.¹¹ With this metaphor of the bucolic or pastoral, Jenny Lind represented the "middle ground" as "somewhere 'between,' yet in a transcendent relation to, the opposing forces of civilization and nature" present in America in 1850.¹² The middle space thus resided somewhere between the diva's

¹⁰ Anonymous, "Criticisms on Jenny Lind," *The Baltimore Sun*, September 20, 1850, 2; Anonymous, "Article on Jenny Lind," *The New York Courier and Enquirer*, September 18, 1850, page n.a.

¹¹ Porter Ware and Thaddeus Lockhard give numerous examples of Lind's American tour line-up and readings during her concerts. Porter Ware and Thaddeus Lockhard, *P.T. Barnum Presents Jenny Lind* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 21–25.

¹² Dizikes offers numerous examples of Lind's operatic voice as compared to the lesser "taste" of her popular repertoire during her American tour. "Americans had heard Jenny Lind . . . they had heard the

transcendent relation to singing and aesthetic of Nature, and the seemingly opposing forces of bel canto—the latter of which embraced the intentional control and discipline of the body for virtuosic singing. This combination marked Lind’s mixed-genre repertoire (between classical and popular).

Lind negotiated the middle space that made the conjuncture of her era. For example, Lind’s “Echo Song” and “Bird Song” constituted the repertoire audiences and critics considered pastoral. Lind combined repertoire and technique on her own terms: adapting a pastoral repertoire and infusing the simplistic, nostalgic lyrics and imagery with the highly-mechanized technique of bel canto style of singing as artifice.

The “Echo Song” and the “Bird Song”: The Echo and Ventriloquism of the Diva and the Technological Sublime

The “echo” effect, according to Leo Marx, is included as part of the pastoral aesthetic in which the landscape surrounding the artist “echoes back,” as if “the consciousness of the musician shared a principle of order with the landscape and, indeed, the external universe.” Marx proceeds to explain the echo as “another metaphor of reciprocity”: “It evokes that sense of relatedness between man and not-man which lends a metaphysical aspect to the mode; it is the hint of the quasi-religious experience to be developed in the romantic pastoralism.”¹³ Similarly, Lind “echoed back” her Swedish Nightingale persona; and, as a Victorian woman, she echoed her virtuousness and altruism.

best of the best. But best of what? Unquestionably, Jenny Lind exemplified technical proficiency at its highest contemporary level. But she did not ‘elevate’ taste” (133). The composer Felix Mendelssohn said about Lind’s choice of repertoire: ‘she is as great an artist as ever lived and the greatest I have ever known. But she sings bad music the best.’ John Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1993), 133–34; William T. Upton, *William Henry Fry: American Journalist and Composer-Critic* (New York: T.Y. Crowell, 1954), 116.

¹³ Marx, *Machine in the Garden*, 23.

With her performance of M. Taubert's "The Echo Song," for example, Lind employed an "echo" method described through the vocal effect she carried from a mythological singer—the soprano sfogato. In 1894, Rockstro defines soprano sfogato through Lind's voice as "a brilliant and powerful soprano, combining the volume and sonority of the true soprano drammatico—to which class of voices it unquestionably belonged—with the lightness and flexibility peculiar to the most ductile and airy soprano sfogato."¹⁴ I describe soprano sfogato as a "vocal effect" rather than a "vocal fach" (voice type) because it was a title from the Enlightenment used to describe the prima donna assoluta as the "perfection" of voice. Divas' mythological *perfection* replaced an accurate description of their capabilities as singers. The most notable contemporary assoluta, Maria Callas, a twentieth-century example of a diva, was accorded this title of soprano sfogato,¹⁵ despite her many flaws of vocal execution. The ability for the prima donna assoluta to transcend "mezzo, dramatic, and coloratura" vocal range—eventually known as "vocal fach"—made the diva seem as if her vocal abilities surpassed the limitations of these categories. Soprano sfogato would be equal to the diva's flawless capability to reach heights of vocal skill and artistry, putting her in line with "la divina," one of the diva's mythic characterizations.

Lind first used soprano sfogato to sing a phrase, and then used a form of ventriloquism to let the phrase resound in a different part of the room. W. S. Rockstro described Lind's voice when performing the "echo" as part of her soprano sfogato effect

¹⁴ W. S. Rockstro, *Jenny Lind: A Record and Analysis of the 'Method' of the Late Madame Jenny Lind-Goldenschmidt* (New York: Novello, Ewer and Co, 1894), 294.

¹⁵ Shannon Wong Lerner, *Personal Interview of Monifa Harris* (Sacramento, California, March 8, 2016).

of *pianissimo*,¹⁶ defined as “so truly piano [quiet] that it fell upon the ear with the charm of a whisper, only just strong enough to be audible.”¹⁷ Rockstro continued describing the effect of Lind’s *pianissimo* upon the audience explaining that it “reached to the remotest corner of the largest theater or concert-room in which she sang.”¹⁸ *Pianissimo*, otherwise known as “sotto voce,” is a quality of singing most closely described as a “whisper that carries.” Lind used *pianissimo* as a sort of quiet and ethereal *echo* or *ventriloquism* to sound as if she were throwing her voice. She enlisted this effect also to mimic sounds that significantly differed from those of her own character. When Lind sang the “Echo Song,” otherwise known as the “Herdsman’s Song,” she did so in her native Swedish. An audience member from St. Louis who visited New York reflected on Lind’s treatment of this song with *pianissimo* as “a new revelation of the capacity of the human voice, and appeared to all a miracle,” saying of Lind: “She would give us the bellowing of the cow, the Herdsman calling his sheep, the cheerful laugh intermixed, and off yonder in the mountains we could hear the echo.” And, “It was such a perfection of art, and so closely resembled nature that you could not distinguish the difference.”¹⁹

Rockstro mentioned that the press focused on Lind’s “Northern genius” as Edenic. Marx describes the American fascination with Edenic imagery and culture as “a native variant of that international form of primitivism.”²⁰ This primitivism thus was rhetoric the public used to justify Lind’s technique and her association with artifice.

¹⁶ Ware and Lockhard, *P.T. Barnum Presents*, 24–25.

¹⁷ W. S. Rockstro, *Jenny Lind*, 12.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* (Italics mine).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 24–25.

²⁰ Marx, *Machine in the Garden*, 7.

European travellers had a long history of escaping to a country setting, with the hope of finding utopia away from their home culture or city living. Primitivist pastoralism occurred when the bourgeois pretended to be “peasants” by moving to the country, and temporarily engaged in rural living. The idea behind this migration came from the notion that with culture (including technology) came a *fall* from grace; and, in turn, if one went *back to nature* (even temporarily), one would resuscitate one’s self from his/her belonging in the city. This example of primitivism was otherwise known as problems of the “mass man” or the *Naturmensch*. Marx warns of sentimental pastoralism within the modern context as running the risk of confusing the awe of nature with technological materialism. In turn, Ortega y Gasset writes about the new or technological Edenic in *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930) as “the outlook of a new kind of man, ‘a *Naturmensch* rising up in the midst of a civilised world’” as someone who “does not see the civilisation of the world around him, but he uses it as if it were a natural force.” For example, Gasset continues, “The new man wants his motor-car, and enjoys it, but he believes that it is the spontaneous fruit of an Edenic tree.”²¹

For Lind, pastoral songs such as the “Echo Song” expanded upon her Scandinavian heritage as did the Swedish pastoral song the “Herdegossen” (“The Herdsman’s Song”). “The Mountain Song,” which Daniel Webster described as “simple mountain melodies of her native land,” did the same.²² Webster was among a body of critics who told Lind to drop opera (repertoire and technique) entirely, partly because of opera’s history in America as an immoral art form. He suggested this also because he

²¹ Ibid., 7–8.

²² Gallagher, “Jenny Lind and the Voice of America,” 196; Henry Pleasants, *The Great Singers: From Jenny Lind and Caruso to Callas and Pavarotti* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), 203.

thought Americans would perceive Lind's singing Swedish folksongs as productive of an authentic persona. Thus, Webster's primitivist preference of Lind's voice as authentic and commodifiable as a popular art (and not a classical one) reflected Gasset's and Marx's trepidation about sentimental pastoralism within a modern venue.

Henry Pleasants recounts an early writing in 1854 from Eduard Hanslick about Lind's Swedish nationality which presented Lind as a singer who was close to nature. Hanslick's early writing also adhered to and supported Webster's American Romantic notion of authenticity: 'An approximate imitation of the song of a bird, almost overstepping the boundaries of music, this warbling going and piping becomes a thing of the most enchanting beauty of in the mouth of Jenny Lynn.'²³ Hanslick elaborated, 'All the fresh, natural Woodland charm of the birds joyous song reach is here incredibly by way of the utmost technical bravura.'²⁴ In a reflection regarding another singer who performed with Lind, Hanslick wrote: "And the tenor Roger, who accompanied her on the tours of the British Isles, remembered 'strength and her singing that threw off the scent of forest and moor.'"²⁵ By explaining Jenny Lind's singing imitated bird-song, almost 'overstepping the boundaries of music,' Hanslick meant to say that her voice transcended the normal boundaries of art as artifice, moving into a realm akin to nature itself. These feats were accomplished through the echo. With specific regard to the echo, critics believed that Lind possessed the ability to mimic birds so realistically that audiences could feel their presence in the room. In experiencing wonder at this authentic

²³ Pleasants, *Great Singers*, 203; Eduard Hanslick, *Vienna's Golden Years of Music 1850—1900*, selected, translated, and edited by Henry Pleasants (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1950).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

portrayal, audiences were unaware that something artificial—technique, skill, and work—was being achieved. In the place of artifice, Lind could echo the pastoral beauty of her native land, and mimic birds as the ‘scent of forest and moor.’²⁶

Lind’s transition of the echo and mimicking of bird sounds as ventriloquism thus realized the technological sublime. The difference in echo and ventriloquism distanced her from the sublime to technological sublime art. This transition was made possible because Lind was separate from the restrictions of her ideal image of sentimental femininity and the primitivist American notion of her Swedish heritage. Instead, through the shift from echo to ventriloquism, Lind asserted her artistry and technique to capture the effect of “throwing her voice.” With ventriloquism, Lind showed the diva’s capacity for multiple personae, which also enlisted artifice, a shift that made some people uneasy.

Marx writes about the “echo” as a musical effect from the mythological character of the Virgilian “herdsman.” Virgil represented the herdsman himself, Tityrus, when he allowed for the “woods to ‘echo back’ the notes of his pipe.”²⁷ In this moment, Marx describes Tityrus as an example of “‘semi-primitivism’ . . . located in a middle ground somewhere ‘between,’ yet in a transcendent relation to, the opposing forces of civilization and nature.”²⁸ However, as a conscious art, or a form of artifice with operatic vocal technique, Lind’s voice crossed over from internal production to external projection. In this process, she played to the illusion of an entirely separate second voice: she ventriloquized a reflection of pastoral nostalgia that was from within as well as external to her. Ventriloquism was not just an effect, but was also a separate voice that

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Marx, *Machine in the Garden*, 23.

²⁸ Ibid.

further embodied her training as an opera singer. Stephen Connor explains this effect as “an active production and not a mere condition of my being.” Connor goes on to say, it’s “unlike my hair colour, gait, or fingerprints, my voice is not incidental to me; not merely something about me.” Rather, he explains, “It is me; it is my way of being me in my going out from myself.”²⁹

Lind’s technique relied on this transition from echo to ventriloquism. For example, Lind’s “Bird Song” mimicked bird sounds. Although if “The Echo Song” was a voice answering Lind in the other persona created by her bel canto technique (Jenny Lind as compared to the Swedish Nightingale) then “The Bird Song” further carried the effect of her half-bird, half-woman nickname of Nightingale. Lind had not only become an echo of herself, but also of a “bird.” Hence, she embodied the pastoral aesthetic of Nature that Americans valued.

When Lind sang the “Echo Song” and “The Bird Song,” audiences were largely pleased by her constructed image and vocal technique because the pastoral repertoire made Lind into the artless, woman singer of Nature. “The Echo Song” and “The Bird Song” were considered pastoral repertoire. However, by carrying some potential for the bel canto “tricks” Lind had learned in Europe, the performances of this repertoire created the middle space between Nature and the machine. Emily Dickinson lauded Lind’s performance of this repertoire even as she disapproved of Lind’s other repertoire and bel canto technique. Dickinson was dismayed because the first resembled Lind as ‘Herself’ (as Jenny Lind) while the other was ‘something else’³⁰ (The Swedish Nightingale). She

²⁹ Steven Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4.

³⁰ Bechtold, ““She Sings a Stamp of Originality,”” 494; Emily Dickinson, “Dickinson to Austin

detailed, ‘How we all loved Jennie [sic] Lind, but not accustomed oft to her manner of singing didn’t [sic] fancy that so well as we did her.’³¹ Dickinson explained that in Lind’s acts of her mimicry, she found Lind’s “‘manner of singing’ distasteful,”³² however she did appreciate her pastoral repertoire. Dickinson elaborated that were Lind to “take some notes from her ‘echo’—the Bird sounds from the ‘Bird Song’ and some of her curious trills’ and her performance would become ‘very fine’ indeed.” Dickinson, however, elaborated on her dislike for Lind’s “extra notes,” meaning her use of ornamentation and the prima donna art of floridity.

Floridity was essential to Lind as the new phenomenon of virtuosic musicians who toured the United States. Beginning with “pure tone” (without vibrato), floridity is the art of improvised and ornamented “runs” within opera repertoire. To the untrained ear, floridity took on the cultural symbol of artifice, technology, and the skill and work of bel canto operatic singing; it communicated the diva’s transformation into something unfeeling, mechanical, and even—in the most extreme cases—the machine itself. Lind’s echoing and ventriloquism also entailed risks, specifically that critical reviewers potentially would see her techniques as artificial. In Lind’s most extreme critiques, reviewers claimed that she risked appearing like an automaton, no longer as the woman singer America had come to know and love. *The New York Courier and Enquirer* challenged Lind’s use of ornamentation, claiming that in travelling too far from the

Dickinson, 6 July 1851,” in *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, vol. 1, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), 120-121.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

garden, she wound up sounding “too mechanical” and “feelingless.”³³ *The Tribune*, however, came to Lind’s defense when they questioned the *Courier’s* criticism, explaining, “she is never mechanical, whatever you may say about want of passion.”³⁴ *The Tribune* then followed Jenny Lind’s performance of Mozart’s *Magic Flute* with a particular florid aria, writing that “she warmed to that music.”³⁵ *The Courier* then retorted that, in reference to Lind’s Scandinavian heritage, the *Magic Flute* “came from her lips with a ‘cold, untouching, icy purity of tone and style.’”³⁶ After summarizing the debate, *The Baltimore Sun* then concurred with the *Courier’s* sentimental version of pastoralism: “While her voice is of wonderful range and power, her command over it is equally extraordinary, and her execution faultlessly correct, in a merely mechanical sense, she yet lacks that faculty of expression by which the sentiment of a musical composition is interpreted to the heart of an audience.”³⁷

The Courier and *The Baltimore Sun* represented critics and audiences who favored sentimental pastoralism. However, those subscribing to modern or complex pastoralism not only accepted Lind’s hybridity of Swedish folksongs with bel canto vocality as the middle space garden in the city, but also believed Lind’s voice symbolized the machine itself. In one of the more modest reviews, an American writer named “Kent” commented on Lind’s success at blending the sentimental with her virtuosic talents: “I

³³ Anonymous, “Criticism on Jenny Lind,” *The Baltimore Sun*, September 20, 1850, 2; Anonymous, “Article on Jenny Lind,” *The New York Courier and Enquirer*, September 18, 1850, page n.a.

³⁴ Anonymous, “Criticism on Jenny Lind,” *The Baltimore Sun*, September 20, 1850, 2; Anonymous, “Article on Jenny Lind,” *The New York Daily Tribune*, September 19, 1850, page n.a.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Anonymous, “Criticism on Jenny Lind,” *The Baltimore Sun*, September 20, 1850, 2; Anonymous, “Article on Jenny Lind,” *The New York Courier and Enquirer*, September 18, 1850, page n.a.

³⁷ Anonymous, “Criticism on Jenny Lind,” *The Baltimore Sun*. September 20, 1850, 2.

never weary of such preferred simple English Ballads to all this gingerbread work of embellished science. But Jenny Lind gives this ornate style new beauty. She seems to simplify and fit it for the heart.”³⁸ According to Kent, Lind did not lose the “heart” of her performance. Rather, she revived it. Indeed, the same critic lauded Lind’s voice as the machine: “The mechanism of art is wonderful, like the steam-engine.”³⁹ Nathaniel Parker Willis then explained Lind’s marvel of singing as a gun: “When she gets to the prompt, un-crusted and foreshadowing West of this country, [she] will find her six-barreled greatness for the first time subject to a single trigger of appreciation.”⁴⁰ In facilitating the middle space, the diva achieved the metaphor of the garden: indeed, Lind effectively negotiated the margin between technique and nature, between science and religion, and between individualism and discipline.

Manuel Garcia: Vocal Training, and from the Wilderness of the Natural Body to the Mechanism of the Trained Singer

Lind’s reception fell to both sides of the stages of pastoralism; and, thus audiences and critics did not just comment on the lyrical meaning of her performance. To provide context for Lind’s ambivalent reception along the pastoralist lines of nature/culture, it may be helpful to understand something about the origins of her technique. Ten years prior to her American tour, Lind took lessons from Manuel Garcia II in Paris. Garcia had been recognized as one of the most important, if not the most influential, vocal

³⁸ John Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1993), 137; Kent, *Home Journal*, November 9, 1850, 134.

³⁹ Lowell Gallagher, “Jenny Lind and the Voice of America,” 197; *The New York Daily Tribune*, November 10, 1850, 5.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

pedagogues of modern times.⁴¹ He was known most prevalently as the inventor of the laryngoscope, a device used by singing instructors to look into their students' larynxes while singing (the device was also used in the medical field).⁴² His observations—thus leading up to the laryngoscope—were also scientific; early in his career, Garcia spent his time dissecting animal and human cadavers, attempting to measure and predict how anatomy established the correct method for singing.⁴³ In 1841, when Garcia met and took on Lind as a student, he had just finished writing his first scholarly paper, “Memoire of the Human Voice,” which he presented to the Academy of Sciences.

“Memoire” explicated Garcia’s notions of “vocal science,” detailing how he treated singing as an exacting cause-and-effect of certain exercises, anatomical positions, and mechanics of the voice. Within this text, Garcia vacillated between describing the voice as a “vocal organ,” a vocal “mechanism,” or a “vocal apparatus.”⁴⁴ Further, he discussed the anatomy and physiology of singing as the responsibility of the student, who must understand her “reciprocal actions among the vibrations of the cords, the breath, and certain parts of the vocal tube through which sound travels.” Garcia claimed, “It is by

⁴¹ Manuel Garcia II was born into a family of famous opera singers in 1805. His mother, father, and sisters had all made names for themselves in opera in Europe and the United States. His father, Manuel Garcia I, was the foremost vocal master of bel canto singing of his time, and his son subsequently repurposed his vocal exercises within his own pedagogy. After discovering his own voice was damaged beyond repair in 1829, Garcia II’s obsession to dissect, experiment, and analyze the voice became his lifelong mission, starting with his work at military hospitals where he studied the larynxes of wounded soldiers with neck wounds. John Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 4.

⁴² *Ibid.*, xxii.

⁴³ M. Sterling Mackinlay, *Garcia: The Centenarian and His Times* (London: William, Blackwood, and Sons, 1908), 100.

⁴⁴ Manuel Garcia, “Extract from the *Memoire on the Human Voice*,” in *A Complete Treatise on the Art of Singing: Part One*, collated, edited, and translated by Donald V. Paschke (New York: De Capo Press, 1984), xliii, lx.

these physical activities that the voice is formed.”⁴⁵ According to Garcia, by having understood her anatomy and physiology, the opera singer was able to “discipline” or “control” her body through principles of vocal science. Only when the opera singer had transitioned from an autonomic body to a well-trained, mechanical body could she gain discipline or control.

The “vocal organ” Garcia mentioned as part of the singer’s anatomy casted the autonomic primal vocality as an utterance of the natural body. Garcia explained this process of vocalization through its range of uses as “the cry, the exclamation, the high or low speaking voice, the singing voice throughout its range, and the intensity of sound.”⁴⁶ Garcia’s comparison of primal vocality, speech, and operatic singing resembled his belief in the relevance using “vocal organ” versus a “vocal mechanism/apparatus.” The former signified the natural body’s primal belonging, corporeality, and the lack of control in the life-sustaining or impulse-driven actions of the body; the latter pointed to the “higher” ground of American Romanticism for the artist to control and discipline the body.⁴⁷

When Lind first met Garcia, her voice was so damaged she was almost completely mute. After she sang for him, Garcia uttered devastating words to her: “It would be useless to teach you, Mademoiselle; you have no voice left.” Lind explained to the composer Felix Mendelssohn years after, “That moment exceeded all that [I] had ever

⁴⁵ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁶ Ibid., xxii.

⁴⁷ Cornelius Reid, “Voice Science: An Evaluation,” *Australian Voice* 11 (2005): 2.

suffered in [my] whole life.”⁴⁸ Garcia took Lind as a student only after she gave her voice complete rest for six weeks.⁴⁹ Lind described the six weeks as torturous. Although her husband claimed she tried her best to stay productive and busy with foreign language studies, knitting, and reading opera scores silently, she took to many restless hours laying in her bed listening to the street sounds of Paris vendors: “Her nerves were excited to the last degree of tension, and never did she forget the exasperating effect of the cries which, day after day, reached her, from the street, as the long dull hours dragged on.”⁵⁰

Committed to a discipline and control of her body, Garcia continued his effort to help Lind recuperate, or, in the mind of a scientist, to produce voice. On September 10, 1841, Lind reported the only detail we have about how Garcia went about teaching her to sing properly. “I have to begin again, from the beginning; to sing scales, up and down, slowly, and with great care; then, to practice the shake—awfully slowly . . . Moreover, he is very particular about breathing.”⁵¹

Throughout her life, Lind’s responses to questions about these lessons wavered, in part agreement with and in part resistance to Garcia’s science-based method. In her early letters from Paris as she studied with Garcia, Lind wrote favorably about his scientific method of singing. Early in her study on February 1, 1842, she wrote, “Garcia’s method is the best of our time: and the one which all here are striving to follow.”⁵² On March 7 of

⁴⁸ Jenny Lind, *Madame Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt: Her Early Art-Life and Dramatic Career: 1820—1851*, Book II, Chapter 1, ed. Henry Scott Holland and W. S. Rockstro (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1891), 68.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 71.

⁵¹ Ibid., 72.

⁵² Ibid., 71.

the same year, she seemed to want Garcia's approval: "My singing is getting on quite satisfactorily, now. I rejoice heartily in my voice; it is clear, and sonorous, with more firmness, and much greater agility . . . Garcia is satisfied with me."⁵³ Throughout the beginning of her memoirs, Lind painted a glowing picture of Garcia, citing him in the highest regard as "Maestro di Canto" (Maestro/Master of Singing).⁵⁴ About two weeks later, Lind wrote in the tone as a schoolgirl who had a crush on her teacher: "I am well satisfied with my singing-master. With regard to my weak points, especially he is excellent. I think it very fortunate for me that there exists a Garcia. And I believe him, also, to be a very good man. *If he takes but little notice of us, apart from his lessons—well!—that cannot be helped; but I am very much pleased, nay! Enchanted with him as a teacher.*"⁵⁵

Later, in 1868, when Lind was forty-eight years old, she explained her unadulterated vocal method in a letter that mimicked much of the anatomical and physiological teachings Garcia gave her. However, she framed this knowledge in her own philosophy of her voice's origins. In a letter revealed by a colleague who also studied voice, she expressed a dramatically different tone regarding the importance of Garcia's lessons: "I have taught myself to sing, Garcia could only teach me a few things. He did not understand my individuality. But that really did not matter. What I most wanted to know was two or three things and with those he did help me. *The rest I knew myself and*

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 66.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 70. (Italics mine).

the birds and our Lord as the maestro did the rest.”⁵⁶ In crediting Christianity (Lutheranism) and the birds instead of Garcia, Lind showed defiance toward Garcia’s teaching, privileging her “natural” abilities and conjuring singing as an act of religious devotion. Having downplayed Garcia’s help, Lind pushed against the claim that she was a product of a scientific discipline. Lind laid claim to the creation of multiple personae with her use of echo and ventriloquism through the “Echo Song” and “The Bird Song.” In denying Garcia’s vocal science or technique as nothing but an extension of the diva’s evolution, she extended her voice into the cultural realm. This evolution occurred, according to Garcia, from cry, to speech, to song through a careful following of his technique and program. Lind, however, claimed she was more capable as a diva of creating her public persona through her own skill and artistic choices. Lind also suggested that her voice originated from her ties to the religious realm of opera, a realm that depended upon rituals and worship of divas and the goal of which was to have the diva transport the audience to transcendent and rapturous states. Also, with this rhetoric, she claimed that her own worship of Nature and God enabled her to be gifted with her voice.

Lind, having declared she was taught by birds, generated more allure and mystique for her nickname, the Swedish Nightingale. In turn, her claim afforded a strange alliance with pastoral spiritualism that aligned birds and angels. Poizat writes about the diva’s evolution in reverse order as compared to Garcia. Instead of Garcia’s scientific

⁵⁶ She also explained some bitterness of Garcia in the same letter when she said, “He has advanced much these last twenty years and has been somewhat cured of his dangerous fault of letting his pupils sing on too long a breath until he ruined their voices.” Jenny Lind, “Jenny Lind’s Singing Method,” *The Musical Quarterly*, ed. Oscar George and Theodore Sonneck (New York: G. Schirmer, 1917), 548–49. (Italics mine).

evolution theories of the diva from primal scream, to speech, to song, Poizat's progression served the pastoral-religious realm of Lind's rhetoric of birds, angels, and spirituality of the diva. Poizat explains that the "pure" cry can only be heard as feminine; in turn, Lind figured as the virtuous diva who might have evoked pleasure from audiences but did not feel it herself. The diva who had made herself a martyr of pleasure paralleled Poizat's associations between the "pure" cry, the angel, the Woman, and the trans-sexual; in sacrifice and death of pleasure for the sake of a perfect voice, Lind as the virtuous diva, had forsaken her identity.⁵⁷

The song of the bird and angel is typically described through the pastoral echo to reflect universal qualities in nature. However, the song of the Woman and trans-sexual evokes ventriloquism by virtue of speaking outside the language of one's own identity in order to be heard. In doing so, a loss of identity through the "Echo Song" and the "Bird Song" became another opportunity for Lind's fame to be seen as natural or accidental rather than formed by artifice and intention. Lind's sainthood also retreated into a rhetoric of sentimentalism to avoid her being stigmatized as a woman in a man's position of visibility and success. Such a tactic extends Lind's main claim that she was the most altruistic prima donna.

The Altruism of the Diva

Lind's persona as an altruistic diva was a strategy to offset the less popular stereotype that prima donnas were "takers rather than givers."⁵⁸ Musicologist Mary Ann Smart explains that prima donnas are "sopranos [who are] routinely demonized in

⁵⁷ Poizat, *Angel's Cry*.

⁵⁸ Hilary Poriss, "Prima Donnas and the Art of Altruism," 43.

operatic history as greedy and ambitious.”⁵⁹ Poriss adds, “Not only are they seen to be capricious and egotistical, they are also inherently selfish, utterly uninterested in aiding others less fortunate than themselves.”⁶⁰ Further, according to John Rosselli, “Prima donnas were widely assumed to be ‘gold-diggers’ who ‘were held to be frivolous if not dangerous.’”⁶¹ Lind’s education under Garcia equipped her with the technique and fundamentals of singing she so desperately needed to continue her career. The education she received for her voice anatomically and physiologically helped her maintain her highly regarded position in Europe. Eventually, it also gave her the edge she needed to become a very well-paid opera singer in the United States. Lind would not concede the benefit of Garcia’s method, which purported to demonstrate the transformation of the *natural body* of the *natural singer* to the *mechanized body* of the *trained singer*. By contending that Nature inspired her art, she refused to admit that her technique was anything other than spiritually inspired. The dichotomy existed between the natural singer with the likeness of birds and the trained singer or vocal artist, the latter ranking of which Garcia’s training provided.

For Jenny Lind, the requirements of this popular aesthetic made audiences want something more authentic from a diva. In 1850 America, an authentic woman in the public eye required membership of the cult of True Womanhood, virtue, morality, artlessness, and a charitable nature. These were all the characteristics Lind claimed to possess before and during her American tour. Compared to Lind’s coverage in *Lady*

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Godey's Book in the 1850s, Lydia H. Sigourney a prominent American society woman rhetorician and writer of conduct books for women wrote in 1840 that the “desire” of a “pure and feminine” woman was for “[s]ympathy not fame.”⁶² Lind was promoted at the time when, although “the artist might strive to find and express the ideal-beautiful, it was assumed there could be no such beauty without morality.”⁶³ “Beauty said Bancroft, ‘cannot exist ‘independent of moral effect.’”⁶⁴ To prepare the newspapers and journals for his publicity campaign to promote Lind as the virtuous, philanthropic diva, P.T.

Barnum wrote the following letter:

The United States shall be visited by a lady whose vocal powers have never been approached by any other human being, and whose character is charity, simplicity, and goodness personified . . . A visit from such a woman, who regards your high artistic powers as a gift from heaven. For the amelioration of affliction and distress, every thought and deed is philanthropy, I feel persuaded she will prove a blessing to America.⁶⁵

P. T. Barnum constructed an image depicting the beauty of Lind’s voice. This image, however, was only suitable when fused with the morality of her character bolstered by matching personality or biography traits.⁶⁶ Russell B. Nye contends that,

⁶² Rebecca Bechtold, “‘She Sings a Stamp of Originality’: Sentimental Mimicry in Jenny Lind’s American Tour,” *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 58, no. 4 (2012): 498—499; Anonymous, “Chit-Chat upon Philadelphia Fashions for January,” *Godey’s Lady’s Book* 42, ed. Louis Antoine Godey and Sarah Josepha Buell Hale, January, 1851, 213, accessed January 12, 2017, www.accessible-archives.com; Anonymous, “Jenny Lind,” *Godey’s Lady Book*, Book 43, ed. Louis Antoine Godey and Sarah Josepha Buell Hale, February 1851, accessed January 12, 2017, www.accessible-archives.com; Anonymous, “Chit-Chat of August Fashions,” *Godey’s Lady Book*, Book 54, ed. Louis Antoine Godey and Sarah Josepha Buell Hale, December, 1851, accessed January 12, 2017, www.accessible-archives.com; Anonymous, “Mr. Wilton: This Gentleman who Accompanied Jenny Lind,” *Godey’s Lady Book*, Book 56, ed. Louis Antoine Godey and Sarah Josepha Buell Hale, February, 1852, accessed January 12, 2017, www.accessible-archives.com; Jenny Lind, “Jenny Lind’s Bird Waltz,” *Godey’s Lady Book*, Book 60, ed. Louis Antoine Godey and Sarah Josepha Buell Hale, May, 1852, accessed January 12, 2017, www.accessible-archives.com.

⁶³ Nye, *Society and Culture in America*, 83.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Anonymous, “Criticism on Jenny Lind,” *The Baltimore Sun*, September 20, 1850, 2.

starting in 1840, artists and writers were no longer judged only by a formal set of “unalterable rules,” but rather that “a work of art ought to be interpreted in relation to its time, place, society, and also in terms of the *author’s own life and personality*.”⁶⁷ Lind’s charitable acts, and thus, her natural gift of voice, allowed for her to be celebrated as she was rather than seen as an artifice; however, Hilary Poriss describes Lind’s altruism as anything but authentic. She writes, “The most compelling reason may have been a conscious or unconscious attempt on her part to gain what Pierre Bourdieu later described as ‘symbolic capital,’ an increase in reputation through noneconomic means (such as charitable acts) that can lead, eventually, to material gain.”⁶⁸ Poriss notes that while Lind historically has been known as the “altruist” prima donna, she didn’t necessarily give more charity than any other prima donnas. The difference was that she more frequently publicized her feats of charity. When Lind was in America, her kind acts of charity were daily news in local papers, commonly accompanied with a list of the amount she donated per charity.⁶⁹ As the critic Henry Chorley explains, the problem with

⁶⁶ Nye, *Society and Culture*, 122.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 79. (Italics mine).

⁶⁸ Poriss cites Jenny Lind as the main diva to publicize regular acts of charity and configured her “altruism” as part of her public image and appeal for people to hear her sing (“Prima Donnas,” 42–43). Thus, charitable giving, John Rosselli explains, extends to the “opera singer” to the middle of the seventeenth century, but was not common with most; it was only in the middle of the eighteenth century when a regular tradition began depicting performers as “givers” with charity concerts and giving money to the poor (44–45). As such, in the nineteenth century, Anglo-American culture became obsessed with the “philanthropic activities of a handful of prima donnas” as evidenced by numerous vignette biographical sketches (mostly republished from newspaper articles) (44). Poriss presents the “trope of the beggar” and the triangle of a famous prima donna, a beggar, and the reader. This tripartite organization is significant for the manner in which it relies on social structures for its efficacy. Specifically, a person of wealth provides for a member (or members) of the working poor, all for the benefit of an “audience,” the readers “who were assumed to be members of the middle class” (47). The symbolic capital of the diva with the “prima donna’s high status” was formed “through the pauper’s low standing and bring[s] these ‘divinities’ down to earth for their middle-class fans” (47). Hilary Poriss, “Prima Donnas and the Art of Altruism,” 42–47; John Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera*.

⁶⁹ Anonymous, “Jenny Lind’s Benevolence,” *Daily Courier*, March 31, 1851.

Lind's image was "she [was] not as selfless as she might outwardly appear; maybe her acts of charity [were] not so much genuine displays of kindness as [much as they were] mere publicity stunts."⁷⁰

Through acts of charity, the prima donna might have strategized to contradict her stereotype as a taker; however, equally, the claims to "altruism" informed the stereotypical image of the prima donna as partaking in "vanity, self-dramatization, capriciousness, irritability, and glamour."⁷¹ As with any "stereotype," these descriptions carried some seeds of truth "so much so that a singer's relationship to the 'prima donna' archetype (or eventually the diva) became . . . significant."⁷² Music critic Henry Pleasants expresses doubts about the "authenticity" of Lind's image, reading her self-presentation against itself: "Behind a saintly exterior, [she] was privately withdrawn, irritable, unpredictable, cold and calculating."⁷³ Pleasants further posits that Lind's image was, in fact, part of her publicity: "The role of the simple Swedish girl, a Hans Christian Andersen 'Ugly Duckling,' the insignificant, snub-nosed, plain, simply dressed, hesitant, unassuming poor-little-me, pining for the northern homeland, pure of heart and noble of thought, was the greatest of her roles. The legendary Jenny Lind was her own masterpiece."⁷⁴

Pleasants continues by asserting that Lind performed her public persona as a charitable woman to mask a superiority complex, a duplicity revealed by her practice as

⁷⁰ Poriss, "Prima Donnas," 43.

⁷¹ Cowgill and Poriss, eds., *Art of the Prima Donna*, xxvii.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Pleasants, *Great Singers*, 198.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

an ardent letter writer. Pleasants reveals the unreliable narration about herself, others, and opera from “ingenuous boasting flanked by disingenuous self-deprecation, gay pleasure in her triumphs modified by protestations of distaste for the theater and its people, longing for Sweden coupled with contempt for Swedish provincialism.”⁷⁵ With these irregularities, Pleasants reiterates Lind’s autonomy of the diva as: “Conspicuous between the lines—and sometimes in them—is a sense of her own unique vocation and goodness. She always seems to be thanking God that she is not as others are.”⁷⁶

Wayne Koestenbaum refers to this rhetoric of self-reference combined with blatant contradictions of speech of the diva as *divaspeak*. Divaspeak happens when the “diva turns a phrase and reverses it—substitutes praise for blame, pride for chagrin, authority for vacillation, salesmanship for silence . . . The diva is always right . . . she assumes that we share her interpretation of the event.”⁷⁷ Lind enlisted divaspeak not only by grandstanding her altruism, but also by claiming she was not taught by Garcia; instead, Lind repeated the old trope of the natural singer, that she had been taught by birds. Lind thus fulfilled her fate when she came to the United States, inserted the bel canto technique and style into a seemingly opposing pastoral aesthetic, and claimed almost complete artistic auto-didacticism. She thus sang to forge her likeness to *Nature*. By focusing on *Nature* and not *nature*, she proved she had not only taken control of the *natural* and *uncivilized* aspect of her body, but sanctified the *mechanical* aspects of it as well.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen’s Throat* (New York, De Capo Press, 2001), 131.

The Problem of the Artificial and Technological in the American Antebellum Period

Poriss explains that fan books and mass media often stereotyped the diva as a “divine monster.”⁷⁸ Lind was known to be one of the most famous, best-voiced, and least difficult divas in the United States. However, Lowell Gallagher contends that Lind’s voice expressed a state of “rapture” laden with religious symbolism, a “spiritual *raptus* . . . mediating between the material and the abstract, Lindomania was to be experienced not as a carnal seduction . . . [rather as] the voice as the unifying resolution of opposing forces, claiming possession of those who had heard it and thus rendering itself immune to critique.”⁷⁹ Lind had become immune to criticism about her claims to having been taught by rapture of the Lord and an Edenic experience with mimicking birds. This claim, combined with the evidence of a manipulative strategy Lind found in her letters, split the diva again. Lind became split not only from her virtuous persona, but also from a coherent production of voice. Instead of having sufficient intellect to control her body to produce a *high art*, she was found to carry *divine monster* traits, as found in her letters. Hence, the diva was reduced to being controlled by some other, possibly *lesser* force. The diva failed to articulate her own process of producing voice, rendering her a great female artist whose embodied art rhetorically shifted the means of production from culture back to nature, therefore obviating any explanation of the process of producing the voice of the diva.

The phenomenon of “Lindomania” has been referred to as “rapture” because Lind’s presence “signaled a desire to possess and to be possessed by the ineffable

⁷⁸ Hilary Poriss, “Divas and Divos,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 377–78.

⁷⁹ Gallagher, “Jenny Lind and the Voice of America,” 197.

presence and authority that Lind's voice seemed to promise and that the hearing of her voice seemed to authenticate."⁸⁰ The diva and the listener's emotional connection to her singing produced an experience of loss of communication centered on language as speech and, therefore, a common human experience of the mixture of pleasure and loss from being a speaking being. Poizat explains: "Human beings can suffer from their status as speaking subjects, and they can find a static pleasure in seeking to forget or deny their fundamental attachment to language."⁸¹ Also quoting from Claude Lévi-Strauss about the potential of music, language, and speech, he wrote in the *Naked Man*:

Music no doubt also speaks; but this can only be because of its negative relationship to language, and because, and separating off from language, music has retained the negative imprint of its formal structure and semiotic function: there would be no music if language had not preceded it and if music did not continue to depend on it, as it were, through a privative connection. Music is language without meaning: this being so, it is understandable that the listener, who is first and foremost a subject with the gift of speech, should feel himself irresistibly compelled to make up for the absent sense, just as someone who has lost a limb imagines that he will still possess it through the sensations present in the stump.⁸²

In *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Thomas Jefferson wrote about the garden in the late eighteenth century as a metaphor for an American utopia and as a peaceful and communal agrarian society. Just as Levi-Strauss asserted music is absent from language and its trappings, Jefferson envisioned American pastoral landscape as escaping the potential wasteland of European modernity, industrialization, and technology. Jefferson drew comparisons between the American garden and what he believed to be the

⁸⁰ Ibid., 192..

⁸¹ Poizat, *Angel's Cry*, ix.

⁸² Ibid., x.; Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Naked Man*, trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman (London: Jonathan Cape, 1981), 647.

degradation of Europe with industrialization, feudalism, and war-torn landscapes.⁸³ This version of American pastoralism was known as the “Jeffersonian dream.” Leo Marx refers to the “Jeffersonian dream” as “sentimental pastoralism” based on a nostalgic “feeling”—eventually, Jefferson believed one would have been better off if he/she “returned” to an earlier time.⁸⁴ However, by 1816, the “idealism” of the Jeffersonian dream was obstructed by the “reality” that America needed to manufacture goods for economic reasons.⁸⁵ Faced with the possibility of “becoming a satellite of Europe” or “regressing to the life of cavemen,” manufacturing was the “reality” that, just forty years earlier, Jefferson hoped America might escape.⁸⁶

Six years before Lind’s arrival in 1850, the railroad began to be recognized as the new mythic image,⁸⁷ the machine that interrupted the pastoral ideals found within Jefferson’s contemplative and peaceful spaces within nature. As well, the telegraph, the automobile, and myriad other technologies continued to supplant nature. In the late eighteenth century, Jefferson could not see the co-constitution of “technology” and “industry,” thus, for him, “progress” didn’t equate “factory manufacturing.”⁸⁸ Jefferson

⁸³ Through Jefferson’s conception, Marx refers to the “garden” as “the Enlightenment . . . the widespread tendency to invoke Nature as a universal norm; the continuing dialogue of the political philosophers about the condition of man in a ‘state of nature’; and the simultaneous upsurge of radical primitivism . . . on the one hand, and the doctrines of perfectibility and progress on the other.” Marx, *Machine in the Garden*, 87.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 140–41.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 140.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 43; Vincent Mosco, *The Digital Sublime: Myth, Power, and Cyberspace* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004); Nye, *American Technological Sublime*.

⁸⁸ Marx explains that Jefferson didn’t think the “factory system was a necessary feature of technological progress.” Although Jefferson was in England in 1786, when manufacturing and the “factory system” had already begun, he looked upon technology as the steam mill with the possibility of a labor-saving device, not a factory-system capable of exploiting its workers. Jefferson saw the steam mill as

preceded popular opinion that, for the sake of progress, the sublime transferred from nature to technology in a reciprocal relation. Jefferson believed—as did many other important men of his time—that technology could exist without destroying nature or agrarian space. As such, Jefferson hoped technology would co-exist with pastoralism as fecundity to support America’s promise of opportunity in the *New World*. Some perspectives from the *New York Daily Tribune* from complex/modern pastoralism assumed Jefferson’s opinion of technology and progress.⁸⁹ They even went as far as to compare Lind’s “pyrotechnics” of singing to industrial and technological innovations such as trains; indeed, Nathaniel Parker Willis, writer and editor of the *Home Journal*, lauded Lind’s voice via a glorified description of the barrel of a gun.⁹⁰

In this dissertation chapter, I have explored the rhetoric and performance of technological sublimity, taking into account the ways that Lind’s technique mediated her concurrent commitment to the technological and pastoral sublimes. Specifically, I argued that her bel canto technique was received critically as part of America’s progress and also as mechanical and feelingless. I have claimed that Lind reconfigured the relationship between the narratives of technology, progress, and pastoralism, and also reconfigured the image of the operatic diva. Lind’s mediation of the technological and pastoral functioned in the performative context of her transgression and reconstitution of the diva, primarily by challenging associations between the diva’s stereotypical prima donna

“simple, great, and likely to have extensive consequences,” and Marx asks the question of why Jefferson would “want the latest most powerful machines imported to America if he would have factories and cities kept in Europe?” *Machine in the Garden*, 146–47.

⁸⁹ Anonymous, “Article on Jenny Lind,” *The New York Daily Tribune*, September 19, 1850, page n.a.

⁹⁰ Gallagher, “Jenny Lind and the Voice of America,” 197; *The New York Daily Tribune*, November 10, 1850, 5.

behaviors. It also demonstrated her transformation from premodern to modern pastoralism. In doing so, she transformed from the derogatory relegation of women to nature into the modern association of working women and culture. For Lind, singing was an act of inhabiting a passage from the sublime as the longing for nature, and the technological sublime as the transferal of her voice as a mechanism or as an instrument comparable to a technology.

Conclusion: From Jenny Lind to Adelina Patti

Jefferson saw America as a “pastoral oasis,” or a young Republic. It could stay as it was if it remained unaffected by European influences. Jefferson hoped that pastoral America would not be concerned with power as Europe had been. Marx explains Jefferson’s pastoral dream as trying to avoid “the feudal past perpetrated by corrupt, repressive institutions, that accounts for the evil economic and military deprivations of Europe.”⁹¹ Jeffersonian pastoral ideology preferred to see America as a panorama of natural landscapes, willfully ignoring the realities of what was to come: the changing city skyline, pollution, corruption, and power. Jefferson was also unprepared for the unequal distribution of wealth and materialism, groups of people with egregious amounts of wealth at the cost of the deprivation of others. American pastoral landscapes would slowly yield to industry, development, and technology. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, looming realities bore down on nostalgia of earlier times, longing for a variation of Jeffersonian pastoralism. Music, literature, and mass media newspaper stories of the late nineteenth century proliferated: “Wild West” fantasies (even when the “West” had been rumored to have disappeared), and, on the more feminine side, a resurgence of Victorian women’s pamphlets and articles on the importance of domesticity and “home.”

⁹¹ Ibid., 137–38.

At the time of Lind's tour during 1850–1852, the “Echo Song” and the “Bird Song” reflected the diva's tie to *Nature* and *artifice*. The diva's art was enabled by her contradiction of Swedish pastoral image and virtue, and the artifice of her bel canto technique. In the United States, Adelina Patti was known for her concert tours and, eventually, her appearance in full operas in which the American public could witness a tried and true prima donna. Even though Patti was already a household name from her childhood fame as a singer with nicknames “Sweet Adeline” and “mini Jenny Lind” in the United States, when she came back twenty-two years later her audiences thought of her as an authentic Italian bel canto prima donna. At the time when Patti was touring the United States (1881–1904), her most popular song, “Home Sweet Home,” resonated with the sentimentalism of her previous tour. By the 1860s, the public was wistful about a pastoral, sentimental, and maternal notion of home. As a structure of feeling, homesickness or the desire for a permanent home came at a time of great mobility when a permanent home was uncertain; thus, the homecoming that Patti's nostalgic repertoire promised served as the fantasy that one could, in fact, return home.

Lind brought audiences an exotic, rapturous pastoralism based on her Scandinavian heritage and half-woman, half-bird nickname of Swedish Nightingale. In comparison, Patti's charm was rooted in her part-American, part-cosmopolitan identity. Patti's heritage as both American and an internationally-famous singer evoked a nostalgia of local mythology centered on fantasies of home, and yet extended to cross-continental imaginations. The opulent Welsh castle that Patti bought with the fortune she had amassed from European and American tours underscored her associations with American cross-continental fantasies of home.

Patti's relationship to the naturalness/artifice paradox then came from her split persona: the first of which was the *piano girl*, a Victorian-American daughter whose discipline for music served as a rehearsal for being a wife and mother, and the second of which was the *cosmopolitan diva* as a *citizen of the world* due to her successful career as a virtuosic coloratura soprano. The piano girl met the expectations that women in Victorian America fulfill a natural domestic role—an image compared to the cosmopolitan diva, who profited from the artifice of bel canto technique. The cosmopolitan diva, then, simulated an ultra-wealthy person's version of the pastoral with a primitivist move from the city to the country, to try to create a utopian home.

During her success in Europe, Patti, as an internationally-famous opera singer, and the most lucrative singer to tour America (perhaps ever), embodied the image of the cosmopolitan, modern woman. To Americans, the cosmopolitan diva was imagined as a well-traveled, cultured, and altruist woman—a stark contrast to her most treasured nostalgic repertoire that focused on an Americana style of popular song from the Civil War era. Thus, the next chapter continues the pastoral theme to consider Patti as the diva whose nostalgic repertoire, “Home Sweet Home,” combined with the *world-famous* voice of a cosmopolitan diva (with a penchant for drawn-out, ornamented interpretations of composers' works). The contradiction of the sentimental pastoralism of Civil War *homesickness/homecoming* and the modern/complex pastoralism of the mobility afforded from her voice effectively produced the sublime, and then the technological sublime.

CHAPTER 3: ADELINA PATTI AND THE PASTORAL NOSTALGIA OF HOME

Adelina Patti, the 1880s and 1890s, and Nostalgia of the Diva

Adelina Patti sang the Civil War song “Home Sweet Home” at almost every performance. Even during operas, she would sit at the piano and sing this nostalgic American favorite as her finalé. “Home Sweet Home” thus stood as a natural counterpoint to assumptions about women in the leading role of prima donna assoluta of the bel canto tradition. Patti’s era of the coloratura (high soprano) followed the musica (castrati) of the bel canto tradition and then the Primo Ottocento (early-nineteenth-century Romanticist divas). Patti singing “Home Sweet Home” in middle-age and older-age evoked the nostalgia of her coloratura voice as one that had faded along with her youthful femininity as a young virtuosic diva. Michel Poizat writes of the art of operatic voice as a sacrifice, as “fallen characters not by sex but by voice,” and thus involving a “cry” as a “pure cry” of the “angel.”¹ The “angel,” as a sexless voice the castrato originally referenced by the Mozarabic church in Spain, and then later by the Catholic church, was “the angelic voice, whose chorus . . . sings the praises of God on high.”²

The church identified this operatic voice in choir as “the traditional function of the angel—the glorification of God—and had associated the high voice, the so-called

¹ Michel Poizat, *The Angel’s Cry: Beyond the Pleasure Principle in Opera* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Press, 1992), 137.

² Ibid., 114.

treble voice, with the angelic position.”³ Women were not allowed to sing in Catholic churches, nor in seventeenth-century Italian public venues; thus, the castrati were used for the soprano voice. John Rosselli explains that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, “Women singers in the early days of opera, then, existed as objects of male expectancy, at once dubious and entrancing. They were not seen as straightforward professional musicians.”⁴ During this time, the tradition of the courtesan women singers performing mostly in royal courts (as the feminine of “courtier”) became part of the reason for not taking women opera singers seriously as musicians.⁵ It wasn’t until the early nineteenth century when women opera singers were considered as separate entities from the courtesan tradition, and became “fully accepted as professional musicians.”⁶ Although the soprano voice was the prima donna’s coveted value as an artist, historically she was not permitted to sing, and so performing in public venues was a stigma. As Poizat concludes, when the voice of the “angel” transitioned to the diva’s voice, “the result [was] not merely woman as such, but Woman driven to death and sacrifice.”⁷

As Ethan Mordden says, “Either the diva leaves the stage, or the stage leaves the diva.”⁸ If it were the former, the diva could leave with grace, and pass the torch to her successor; if it were the latter, however (the more familiar narrative), she would be

³ Ibid.

⁴ John Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera: The History of a Profession* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 159.

⁵ Ibid., 61-62.

⁶ Ibid., 68.

⁷ Poizat, *Angel’s Cry*, 1992, 133.

⁸ Ethan Mordden, *Demented: A Provocative Look at Opera’s Greatest Divas* (New York: Touchstone, 1990), 6.

viewed through rehearsed Romanticist myths about the self-destructive artist who sacrificed health, well-being, and even life itself for art. A vital plot point in Romanticist narrative was the artist committing suicide to honor both the immortality of his or her art and the audience's love for the artist's persona at the height of his or her career and youth—reflecting the vanity of the diva.

Patti eventually repudiated this narrative, despite her vocal feats and fame in youth as an *assoluta coloratura* diva. However, she didn't relinquish her throne to a younger diva. Instead, she held her position as "Queen of Song" by changing her venue, repertoire, and singing style to best highlight her lower vocal range. By singing "Home Sweet Home" as popular repertoire, she could perpetuate her *divine monster* persona. Divine monster, as defined by Hillary Poriss was the *divine* qualities of a diva's voice to sing well (especially her ability to hit the soprano notes) that allowed for her audience to tolerate and at times, become fascinated by the bad behavior of a stereotypical prima donna.⁹ She used her reputation as *monster*—demanding, capricious, and difficult—to enhance her own well-being as an aging diva. Even as the divine part of her voice (as a soprano) was disappearing, Patti sustained the best aspects of her voice through her repertoire. As such, she used nostalgia for antebellum America with "Home Sweet Home" to perpetuate her status as diva.

American acclaim for Adelina Patti, the world-famous prima donna, drew upon the prevailing cultural theme of the 1880s and 1890s: the pastoralism of home. Patti's sentimental invocation of domesticity was precisely the tonic that a rapidly industrializing and increasingly mobile America longed for. The nightingale qualities and

⁹ Hillary Poriss, "Divas and Divos," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 377-378.

anodyne femininity of Patti's coloratura voice type embodied the Victorian virtues of the hard-working, obedient *piano girl*, while her lower register, used for the family parlor song "Home Sweet Home," featured a more mature side. This latter role was paired with her persona as a *cosmopolitan diva*—a well-traveled, globally renowned singer of class and distinction. The two personae of the diva extended the basic strategy employed by Lind to address anxieties about the transition from pastoralism to modernity, and operated as a means of negotiating and upholding the paradox of the successful working woman.

Beginning in 1846, technologies like the transcontinental railroad, bridges (1860s), skyscrapers (mid-1870s), and the automobile (1900s), threatened the Victorian, American, domestic lifestyle.¹⁰ According to John Picker, the aesthetic of "home" in the late-Victorian era partly served to support coping with the disturbances of modern life: invading sanctity, perturbing subjective sensation, or disrupting the quiet of Victorian home life and domesticity.¹¹ During the 1880s and the 1890s, Americans were caught between aesthetic and cultural differences with domestic arts. The domestic arts featured in late Victorian homes contrasted with the commercial and materialist interests of new, capitalistic moderns. These modern developments interrupted the Victorian focus on health and self-improvement, and on the spiritual redemption its adherents hoped to receive from domestic arts, including piano playing, quilting, reading, decorating, storytelling, and eventually photography and phonograph recording and playing.¹² In

¹⁰ David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1994), xiv-xv.

¹¹ John Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 53, 55.

¹² Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling, eds., *The Arts and the American Home: 1890-1930* (Nashville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), v-vi.

contrast, new moderns attended classical arts for reasons of class, decadence, or materialism, or they consumed secular and working class forms of popular literature and popular music.¹³

The contradictions between Patti's mobile lifestyle as a cosmopolitan diva and the domestic homebody of the piano girl fueled an ongoing debate about art's production and experience (or consumption). The late nineteenth-century diva in America reflected a historical moment of post-Civil War life and the industrial revolution, and shifted away from the simple idealism of Lind's era to one that valued competitive capitalism.¹⁴

America had once embraced an idealism that drew upon motifs of the Romantic movement, but, in a dramatic switch, the next generation decided to "live for present profit and personal advantage alone."¹⁵ This privileged, new-moneyed social group of the Industrial Era included many wealthy tycoons who built gaudy, tasteless monuments to symbolize their greatness. These were the richest and wealthiest of the "Gilded Age," such as Charles Crocker, who built a "four-story, \$1.25-million monstrosity" some described as "a delirium of the wood carver"; and Mark Hopkins's "maze of towers, turrets, and gables, which spread itself out over half a city block."¹⁶ These were radical aesthetic and social shifts away from late-Victorian America's simpler, more practical approach, escaping what they considered the less savory aspects of the city.

¹³ "Beauty," as Lewis Mumford has said, "was defined in terms of visible possessions." In art, sentimentality and banality reigned supreme, as seen, for example, in the popularity of Currier and Ives prints and the sculptures of John Rogers, whose little foster "groups" adorned 100,000 American parlors. Quoted in John A. Garraty, *The New Commonwealth: 1877-1890* (New York: Harper and Rose, 1968), 15-16.

¹⁴ Jessica Foy, "The Home Set to Music," *Arts and the American Home*, 62.

¹⁵ Garraty, *New Commonwealth*, 17.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

Craig H. Roehll describes Victorian home life as a retreat from the Industrial Revolution, and suggests that therefore parlor music “reinforced the notion of the home as a refuge from the new fast-paced, machine-driven, business-oriented society.”¹⁷ When Patti brought parlor music—in the form of “Home Sweet Home”—to a public venue and combined it with an operatic voice, she invented the cosmopolitan piano girl. In doing so, she drew upon nostalgic tropes to negotiate the paradox between the two personae and what they represented socially—a quintessential example of which is Patti’s performance for the President at the Chicago Auditorium in 1889.

It was Monday morning, December 9, 1889, when the Italian opera singer Adelina Patti’s “echo” from Lind’s performed song, M. Taubert’s “Echo Song” and “Home Sweet Home” was heard resonating off of the majestic walls of the Chicago Auditorium, a “modern Pantheon—typifying the spirit of the age.”¹⁸ Priced at 3.5 million dollars, with a seating capacity of eight thousand, a grand organ, and a recital hall, the auditorium had “136 stores and offices, a hotel with 400 guest rooms, and a magnificent banquet hall 175 feet long.”¹⁹

United States President Benjamin Harrison spoke at the inauguration of the Chicago Auditorium, followed by the “hymn of ‘America’ by the Apollo Club of 500 trained voices,” and then by Adelina Patti’s solos. The President began his speech by expressing the “awe” he experienced in standing in the Auditorium, describing it as “this witching and magnificent scene . . . this magnificent building . . . [of] grandeur and

¹⁷ Craig H. Roehll, “The Piano in the American Home,” *Arts and the American Home*, 219.

¹⁸ Benjamin Harrison, *Speeches of Benjamin Harrison, Twenty-Third President of the United States: A Complete Collection of His Public Addresses from February, 1888, to February, 1892* (New York: United States Book Company, 1892), 219.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 220.

architectural triumph . . . the magnificent spectacle.”²⁰ Inspired by the diva’s inimitable “cry” (once the castrati’s “cry”), his speech made a performative turn as a “speech within a speech,” thus, “speaking” to the failures of language to communicate the sublime experience of being within grandiose modern edifices: “Not speech, certainly, not the careless words of an extemporaneous speech, can adequately express all the sentiments I feel in contemplating the fitting culmination of this deed. [Applause.] Only the voice of the immortal singer can bring from these arches those echoes which will tell us the true purpose of their construction.”²¹

President Harrison extolled Patti’s voice as an immortal secret held only by select prima donnas. The diva’s voice was enshrined within the auditorium as yet another indicator of the wealthy’s exclusive ability to demonstrate their power and greatness. However, President Harrison’s repetition of “magnificent” divulged his unmitigated awe of this late nineteenth-century “Tower of Babel” “with a total height 270 feet, one of the tallest buildings in the world.”²² The auditorium brought its inhabitants closer to the idyllic sky at the expense of further division with those who resided at its feet. The Gilded Age built up its American cities and skylines to extremes which manifested in grandeur to some and disorientation to others. These extravagant displays of wealth may have made the affluent feel at home, but such exclusive pleasures came at the expense of quality of life for less wealthy classes with rural roots who suffered from homesickness and nostalgia for pastoral landscapes.

Patti was a shrewd businesswoman who knew her remarkably high market value

²⁰ Ibid., 221.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

with enthusiastic American audiences, and she laid claim to these often-gaudy spaces, making herself at home in the spotlight.²³ Wayne Koestebaum describes these carefully crafted parallels thusly: “The diva’s home, a stage, is a shrine to herself; it teaches the fan that home should be grand as opera, that home is not a place in which one should tolerate diminishment. At home, as rendered in diva myths, the great lady expands, unwinds, and creates memorials to her own magnitude.”²⁴ Similar to “divaspeak,” the “diva at home” resists the perception of mediocrity, domesticity, and criticism.

In October 1877, Patti made a home for herself in the castle Craig-y-Nos, situated in the Welsh countryside. It was a “square building” to which she added two wings and a clock tower. In the spirit of the Gilded Age, Patti purchased hundreds of the surrounding acres, including rivers and forest space for her husband to hunt and fish, and for her daily walks. Craig-y-Nos was a “tall, solid, gray-stone building designed by T.H. Wyatt”; soon, Patti would only refer to the house as a “castle.”²⁵ Transforming the country house into a castle was thus much like the new, industrial moneyed class’s monuments to its own greatness. Although Craig-y-Nos was not littering the landscape of the American metropolis, its new, cosmopolitan panache and outsized spectacle clashed with the serene landscape of the Welsh countryside.

²³ Edward Cone cites that Patti collected \$4,000 for singing two songs for the Chicago Auditorium inauguration. For the rest of her 1889–1890 engagements in Chicago, the diva totaled \$223,000 for four weeks of performances. After Chicago, Patti, as the main attraction, continued to tour with impresario Henry Abbey, visiting Mexico, San Francisco, Denver, Omaha, Louisville, Boston, and Philadelphia, then back to Chicago, and finally closing in New York after four months for a cash receipt of \$1,000,000. Patti’s receipt from her 1889–1890 tour was unheard of for a singer of the nineteenth century. John Frederick Cone, *Adelina Patti: Queen of Hearts* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1993), 184–187.

²⁴ Wayne Koestebaum, *The Queen’s Throat* (New York: De Capo Press, 2001), 123.

²⁵ Cone, *Adelina Patti*, 131.

To conflate *private* and *public* venues, at times, Patti would have a piano rolled onto stage to play as an accompaniment to “Home Sweet Home” and other American folk repertoire such as “Comin’ thro’ the Rye.”²⁶ Before Victorian times, a woman did not accompany herself on stage on the piano but rather on the harp, both of which traditionally symbolized her “modesty.”²⁷ However, for Patti, the gesture articulated divaspeak as if she were at her extravagant home singing parlor songs. As Poriss explains, Patti staged a performative act as “an opera-within-an-opera [that] accrued an extra layer of performativity in which audience members participated as actively as the singer herself.”²⁸ Patti, as a middle-aged and, later, elderly woman performed the piano girl as a tongue-in-cheek gesture of “gender identification . . . constituted by a fantasy-of-a-fantasy” of domesticity fused with cosmopolitan glamor and opulence.²⁹ Patti’s staging of this song at the piano contrasted the cosmopolitan diva of newly acquired wealth and

²⁶ Henry Pleasants describes an important moment when Patti used the piano on stage: “At the Metropolitan in New York, two years later [in 1891], she had a piano pushed through the curtain after a performance of the *Barber of Seville*. She had sung Eckert’s ‘Echo Song’ and ‘Home, Sweet Home’ during the Lesson Scene, and now she sang ‘Comin’ thro’ the Rye.’” Henry Pleasants, *The Great Singers: From Jenny Lind and Caruso to Callas and Pavarotti* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), 211.

²⁷ Correcting the young lady’s posture from the piano was compared to the previous generation of young ladies who were told to use of the harp for accompaniment while singing, which was later believed to “cause curvature of the spine”; consequently, the horn, violin, and especially the cello “were definitely unsuited to modest young ladies and would cause ‘detriment of their feminine attractions.’” Andrew Roell, “Piano in the American Home,” in *The Arts and the American Home, 1890–1930*, ed. Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling (Nashville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 191.

²⁸ Hilary Poriss describes how a “handful of famous prima donnas from the nineteenth-century effectively ‘authored’ versions of operas by inserting arias into their scores that did not originally belong.” The Lesson Scene, from Rossini’s *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (*Barber of Seville*) acted as an outlet for prima donnas to insert other repertoire within the place of the aria “Contro un cor che accede amore.” In Patti’s case, the replacement of this sole aria became a device for a “mini-concert,” featuring other arias and popular songs— such as “Home Sweet Home”—flattering to her voice and pleasing to the audience. The effect of the Lesson Scene located at the end of the opera allowed aria insertion to be extended with participation by the audience as performativity of their adoration of the singer when she took requests (as an “opera within an opera”). Hilary Poriss, *Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas and the Authority of Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 159.

²⁹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 175.

international mobility with the parodied piano girl image based on a diva at home at the Craig-y-Nous.

Patti's choice to sing these songs then jeopardized her previous association with the old Italian school of bel canto prima donna as the youthful coloratura. This older version of the prima donna as self-sacrificing and virtuosic began to depart and make room for a new, modern type of diva. By evoking the older trope of the piano girl, Patti conjured up the pastoral nostalgia of an earlier time of Victorian values, when young women performed arts in the sanctity of the home, seeking self-improvement, for family, and perhaps to appeal to suitors. However, as the cosmopolitan diva, Patti would create technological nostalgia by showing an international mobility that demonstrated a new way of finding home *where you were*. Faced with the poles of this historical moment, Patti effectively constructed a middle space between both personae.

The Middle Space of Home with the Pastoralism of the Piano Girl and the Cosmopolitan Diva

Arcadian paradise stems from the introduction of a “contrast between two worlds: one world identifies with rural peace and simplicity, the other with urban power and sophistication” as early as the time of Virgil's *Eclogues* (Marx 19). The difference between Arcadian and Edenic paradise can be traced back to the narrative of Virgil's *Eclogues* and its use of the shepherd to find a middle space garden between the wilderness, pastoral nature where his sheep are kept, and the city of Rome. While Edenic paradise is also pastoral, the Arcadian paradise contrasts Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Found*. Milton's epic poem serves as a reference to the Edenic garden of the first chapters of Genesis as a paradise shielding Adam and Eve from any contact with

civilization, society, and the outside world.³⁰ In the classical Virgilian narrative of sentimental pastoralism, home borders on primitivism: “To withdraw from the great world and begin a new life in a fresh, green landscape.”³¹ As Leo Marx explains, if we think of the pastoral mode of home, we can place Virgilian pastoralism as a “contrast between two worlds,” the first “identified with rural peace and simplicity . . . the other with urban power and sophistication.”³² Exchanging Lind’s Edenic paradise for Patti’s Arcadian one, Virgil’s first Eclogue describes three different spaces that, in contrast and comparison, constitutes an Arcadian “home” of art and humanity: the power of the city and political forces of Rome; the wild, dangerous, and uncivilized terrain that stretch out between two spaces; and, finally, the ideal middle space—“neither wild nor overcivilized, where the dream of harmony between humanity and nature might be attainable.”³³ By invoking nostalgia with the song “Home Sweet Home,” Patti forged a middle space between the social roles of her two personae, the piano girl and the cosmopolitan diva.

Nostalgia comes from the Greek *nostos*, to return home, and *algia*, a painful condition—thus, a painful yearning to return home.³⁴ Susan J. Matt frames nostalgia in terms of homesickness, as a form of “trauma,” medical condition, or malady experienced by soldiers and new immigrants. Homesickness was a medical condition from “the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, [when] Americans moved frequently, but they were

³⁰ Joseph Duncan, *Milton’s Earthly Paradise: A Historical Study of Eden* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 6.

³¹ Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

³² *Ibid.*, 19.

³³ *Ibid.*, 377.

³⁴ Stuart Tannock, “Nostalgia Critique,” *Cultural Studies* 9, no. 3 (1995): 453–64.

not fully accustomed to leaving home and did not find the process easy or natural.”³⁵

Immigrants from Europe who arrived in the United States experienced loneliness, melancholia, and disorientation—thus “homesickness” was considered “a dire and potentially fatal malady.”³⁶ This “trauma associated with migration” was believed to have only one cure: “return sufferers to their homes *before* the condition turned fatal.”³⁷

In his 1977 work, *The Fall of Public Man*, Richard Sennett writes, ‘A history of nostalgia has yet to be written.’³⁸ Susannah Radstone follows Sennett’s point by noting that “the ubiquitous association of the culture . . . in the West, with the rise of memory, has established this characterization of culture as almost a ‘fact’ of history” thereby with nostalgic themes.³⁹ Just two years after Sennett’s observation, Fred Davis writes optimistically about using nostalgia to help with the “construction and reconstruction of identity in changing times and a response to threats to continuity of identity.”⁴⁰ Since then, in contrast to Davis’ hopeful lens of nostalgia, in the 1990s, Norman Denzin reinterprets nostalgia as an anxious modern and postmodern condition that ‘looks fearfully into the future.’⁴¹ Through the lenses of these studies, nostalgia seems to be a

³⁵ Susan J. Matt, *Homesickness: An American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3–4.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 3. (Italics mine).

³⁸ Susannah Radstone, *The Sexual Politics of Time* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 112; Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 168.

³⁹ Susannah Radstone, *The Sexual Politics of Time* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 112.

⁴⁰ Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 8.

⁴¹ Radstone, *The Sexual Politics*, 113; Norman K. Denzin, *Images of Postmodern Society* (London: Sage, 1991), 79.

permanent fixture of looking back at the start of modernity (with its mobility of modern, working people) at the expense of a fixed home and community. Within this dynamic, nostalgia becomes a middle space between “memory,” which has been such a strong focus in modern and postmodern studies of trauma,⁴² and an ahistorical and psychological opportunity to provide a service to those adjusting to new times in modernity.⁴³

Davis explains: “Home is always some place, be it ever so humble or grand, fixed or even movable, as in the case of modern trailers and mobile homes.”⁴⁴ In accordance with these themes, Patti offered a mobile example of home across multiple spaces, time periods, and national belongings. As the diva frequently on tour, Patti also became an extension of nostalgia’s productivity to mediate times of rapid change.⁴⁵ She fashioned a middle space between the sentimentalist pastoralism of the house-bound Victorian piano girl (a trope of the Cult of True Womanhood) and the cosmopolitan diva, based on the modern/complex pastoralism of the *self-made (wo)man*. The self-made woman derived

⁴² Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton, eds., *Memory and History in Twentieth-Century Australia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (London: Routledge, 1995); Susannah Radstone, *The Sexual Politics of Time* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Keith Tester, *Life and Times of Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1993).

⁴³ Fred Davis, “Nostalgia, Identity and the Current Nostalgia Wave,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 11 (1977): 414–24; Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: Free Press, 1979); Frederick Raphael, “Swimming against Time and Tide,” *Independent* (August 20, 1996): 4–5; C. Sedikides, T. Wildschut, and D. Baden, “Nostalgia: Conceptual Issues and Existential Functions,” in *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology*, ed. Jeff Greenberg (New York: Guilford Publications, 2004), 200–214; Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973).

⁴⁴ Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday*, 179.

⁴⁵ Tester, *Life and Times*, 418–19.

from justifications of *mobility* that were prominent during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, a period when colonialists migrated from Europe to America.⁴⁶

Barbara Welter grounds the “piano girl” in the family home, a place that upheld values of thrift, self-reliance, and, for Victorian women, “piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity . . . Put them all together and they spelled mother, daughter, sister, wife—woman.”⁴⁷ Thus, for Victorians, playing the piano was not just musical practice: it was a womanly gesture of making home a “moral” and “medicinal” haven for her family, away from modern influences. For Victorians, “home was sacred, a shelter from the anxieties of industrial society, and a shelter for the moral and spiritual values that the commercial spirit was threatening.”⁴⁸

The Cult of True Womanhood had its own social guidelines for Victorian women, especially in their respective roles as family members. Women were expected to make a good home for their families, cultivating an atmosphere of propriety, culture, and class. A young lady of this period learned how to set the scene for Victorian womanhood and the maternal role by playing an instrument. Playing the piano, especially in the late nineteenth century, was considered a feminine art, and a symbol of class and culture. The piano girl was “not just cultivating a pastime or social grace; she was playing her proper role.”⁴⁹ The nineteenth-century music and culture journal *The Musician* explained the role of the piano girl as follows: “She prepared herself to minister to the joy and pleasure

⁴⁶ Matt, *Homesickness*, 4.

⁴⁷ Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood 1820–1860,” in *Locating American Studies*, ed. Lucy Maddox (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1957), 44.

⁴⁸ Roell, “Piano in the American Home,” 90.

⁴⁹ Roell, “Piano in the American Home,” 91.

to others, thus fulfilling the social ideal.”⁵⁰ Victorians held deep faith in self-improvement activities which brought families together. For young women, this meant keeping busy with acts of self-discipline, such as piano playing, so they would not fall victim to outside, modern influences constituent with the modern age, urban environments, and technology.⁵¹

According to the popular Klavier Schule method, the piano girl practiced self-discipline by sitting at the piano, arduously playing scales and exercises, and focusing on posture and comportment.⁵² Likewise, Patti abided by a set of strict exercises passed down by her opera family for her strength of will as an adult to ensure the health and quality of her voice.⁵³ Victorians held their sons and daughters to a strong work ethic. Music teachers, and especially piano teachers, held their students to the same high standards. Within nineteenth- and twentieth-century America, piano teaching was focused on the “Klavier Schule” method from Klavier Schule of Siegmund Lebert and Ludwig Stark. Lebert and Stark co-authored this historically significant method of teaching in 1858; its main objectives were to “strengthen the fingers by rigidly playing studies, scales, arpeggios, and exercises ‘with power and energy . . . This athletic finger

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ According to historian Hughson Mooney, beginning with the 1890s, popular parlor song music was “raucous, rebellious, and ribald” and reflected less the “purity” and sentimentality of acceptable Victorian parlor songs than “the language and reality of life of the common folk . . . a new patriotic fervor . . . and occasionally even a mild hedonism with hints of sensuality unheard of in earlier parlor songs.” Jessica Foy, “The Piano in the American Home” in *The Arts and the American Home, 1890–1930*, ed. Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling (Knoxville: Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press), 70.

⁵² A piano was chief among the instruments appropriate and even beneficial for a young lady in the way it trained her body for the proper conduct to receive suitors: to “sit posture perfect with feet demurely together, engaged in the pursuit of culture, enjoying the moral uplift of music.” Roell, “The Piano in the American Home,” 91.

⁵³ Herman Klein, *The Reign of Patti* (New York: The Century, 1920), 22, 29, 30, 122, 126, 386, 388, 442.

training demanded practice several hours a day, regardless of whether the pupil aspired to a concert career or merely to enhanced social graces.”⁵⁴ As an adult, Patti stuck to a daily regimen that reflected Victorian empirical discipline; her regimen included exercise and a good diet. (Patti never ate cold foods, fatty foods, coffee, tea, or alcohol of any kind.)⁵⁵ She also claimed that she maintained her voice with constant vocal exercises and periods of not singing or speaking before a performance. But, at the same time that she represented the virtuous, Victorian piano girl, Patti also represented the cosmopolitan diva. During the period when she toured in the United States (as an adult, from 1881–1904), cosmopolitanism was of the utmost importance because the nation had opened its doors to and become influenced by international movements such as European technology and industrialism. America had also become involved in European trade, their politics and wars, and European immigration. The combination of these currents rendered the pastoral landscape, and the relatively isolated, agrarian America of the mid nineteenth century, a part of the Romanticized past.⁵⁶

Patti’s cosmopolitan diva persona embodied multiple nationalities, time periods, and complex images of womanhood, Victorianism, and modernity. Patti came from Italian parents, and was born in Spain. She was trained by Europeans, but spent her childhood in the United States. As an adult, she lived in Wales. These shifting modes of

⁵⁴ Roell, “Piano in the American Home,” 189.

⁵⁵ Herman Klein, *The Reign of Patti* (New York: The Century, 1920), 125.

⁵⁶ Harold U. Faulkner writes about the period during which Patti toured as a transition from “the [old] America” to the “new America”; the former was “overwhelmingly rural and agricultural . . . as relative[ly] isolated . . . and romantic in temperament,” while the latter was “predominately urban and overwhelmingly industrial, inextricably involved in world politics and world wars, experiencing convulsive changes in population, economy, technology, and social relations, troubled by the crowd and problems through their shadow of the promise of the future.” Harold U. Faulkner, *Politics, Reform, and Expansion: 1890–1900* (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1959), ix.

belonging made her reference to homecoming complex. Patti was also known to the American public as a child star, and she retained her quality of youth in her voice and youthful looks up until her forties, which helped her to maintain the 1850s–1860s nostalgia of earlier performances. With her mobile lifestyle and multiple sense of belonging, Patti was the ideal candidate for a cosmopolitan conception of home—a *citizen of the world*, not bound to any one country.

As Sean Matthews describes it, nostalgia is the counterpoint to cosmopolitan dreams. Cosmopolitanism emphasizes the liberatory possibilities of being rootless, while nostalgia evokes a longing for a home. Nostalgia, then, is not alien to cosmopolitan modernity; it is a “structure of feeling” *within it*, squarely rooted in response to cosmopolitan pressures. It is the act of “invok[ing] a positively evaluated past world [and a] response to a deficient present world . . . the key tropes central to nostalgic rhetoric . . . [including] a Golden Age and a subsequent Fall, the story of Homecoming, and the pastoral.”⁵⁷ With her performance as diva, Patti responded to the dual imperatives of this context. Invoking the piano girl, Patti paid homage to a “positively evaluated past world,” feigning resistance to some part of the present world that seems to be invading it.⁵⁸ Patti simultaneously figured the cosmopolitan diva and the classic piano girl in her response to modern nostalgia. In doing so, she carved out a middle space between longing for the past and anxiety about the future. Modern nostalgia became as an “ideal [that] has been

⁵⁷ Stuart Tannock, “Nostalgia Critique,” *Cultural Studies* 9, no. 3 (1995): 454.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

incorporated in a powerful metaphor of contradiction—a way of ordering meaning and value that clarifies our situation today.”⁵⁹

“Home Sweet Home,” the Adventures of Piano Girl, and Cosmopolitan Altruism

In the 1880s to 1890s, the diva became part of the modern, nostalgic conjuncture as “the passing of ‘home’ on the old sense” of “hearth and home.” The diva embodied the tension “aris[ing] from the tremendous mobility of persons in their occupations, residences, localities, and even countries of birth.” Thus, her mobility could be thought of as “characteristic of the industrial order of modern Western society.”⁶⁰ As Davis explains, the modern nostalgia of home didn’t abolish the longing for it; rather, it complicated the previous generation’s singular sense of location and time. Articles about Patti’s multiple tours in America fashioned her as a piano girl *on the road*, much like the American genre that featured the adventurous explorer Davy Crockett. As collective ideology similar to the one that produced the Davy Crockett adventure stories positioned Patti as the mythic heroine adventuring across rough terrain. She also produced this collective ideology by singing the nostalgic parlor song “Home Sweet Home” as a way for audiences to deal with the sound from the city impinging upon the sanctity of the home. To better understand how Patti acted as a symbol of social imaginary using “Home Sweet Home,” it is both necessary and exigent to explain the materialization of the diva’s voice.

In response to all of her changes with age, Patti strategized nostalgic tropes to appeal to shifting tastes of opera between late-Victorian and early modern audiences. When she sang “Home Sweet Home,” she let go of the expectations of being a coloratura

⁵⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁰ John Howard Payne and Harry Macdonough, composers, and Henry R. Bishop, lyricist, *Home Sweet Home* (Montréal: Improved Berliner Gram-o-phone, 1902), 2.

of the old Italian bel canto repertoire, and instead she accessed the modern diva through the specific lower range of her voice. But as Patti's voice changed from a youthful, flawless coloratura to a still gorgeous yet lower-voiced middle-aged and older soprano, the nostalgia of this song prevailed.

Henry R. Bishop and John Howard Payne, the original songwriters of "Home Sweet Home," celebrated Victorian feminine domesticity with their lyrics. According to Roell, they referred to home as an "'oasis in the desert' . . . [thus,] woman's role was to create a home in which to nourish love, morality, religion, and culture."⁶¹ "Home Sweet Home," spoke of the adventures of "pleasures and palaces" that a soldier or immigrant coming to America might dream of, while concluding that "there's no place like home."⁶² However, Civil War soldiers were eventually forbidden from listening to this song because of its overly sentimental reference to the "hearth and home" that were so valued by country boys not used to leaving homes and their mothers.⁶³ Such nostalgic songs supposedly encouraged desertion and provoked a fatal condition of homesickness or nostalgia.

Beginning in 1850, at the age of seven, Patti came to reign over the stage as prima donna, and her reign endured longer than most others'. She had her last performance in 1914, at the age of seventy-one.⁶⁴ Early on, critics complained, "Her voice was comparatively weak at the bottom," which is common for coloratura sopranos; and, later

⁶¹ Roell, "Piano in the American Home," 90

⁶² Payne, Macdonough, and Bishop, *Home Sweet Home*, 2.

⁶³ Matt, *Homesickness*, 40.

⁶⁴ Pleasants, *Great Singers*, 205.

in her life, “it was weak at the top.”⁶⁵ However, these problems, which came with an incredibly long career for an opera singer, were solved with “choice of repertoire and transition.”⁶⁶ In 1890, George Bernard Shaw said of Patti’s voice: “Time has transposed Patti a minor third down.”⁶⁷ However, despite her changes and fluctuations in vocal range, audiences experienced her “as a true singer, who could melt hearts with a simple ballad [as “Home Sweet Home”] when she could no longer confound the imagination with the brilliance of her coloratura and her easy flights to the high F.”⁶⁸

When Patti toured as an older diva, audiences always waited and expected her to sing “Home Sweet Home.” The popularity of Patti’s rendition of this song continued, despite the fact this song didn’t display the dazzling “pyrotechnics” of her youth or her coloratura voice. J. H. Duval explains that Patti was “a high soprano with the notes in the very high register.” However, Duval also remarks that Patti carried the capacity for a “lyric, a very rich lyric, with a lower range of a little mezzo-soprano.” In fact, Patti’s mezzo-soprano range was so low, she was nicknamed “Il contraltino” for the lowest type of mezzo.⁶⁹

Pleasants describes Patti’s tradition and aesthetic of bel canto coloratura soprano of the “Rossini-Donizetti-Bellini-Meyerbeer repertoire,” as being marked by its “tardiness” because, at the time, modernist opera was popular, most notably Wagner.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Cone, *Adelina Patti*, 199.

⁷⁰ Pleasants, *Great Singers*, 208.

Her voice was not known to be the most voluminous voice type (especially for singers of Strauss, late Verdi, and Wagner); all the same, it “was gorgeous, of a lovely rich colorful ring that carried so well she could be heard in the vast auditoriums.”⁷¹

Writing about “Home Sweet Home,” in 1893 the critic William Armstrong “found her singing [and perhaps also, the popularity] of this ballad unusual.” He continued: “I have never heard any approach the beauty of Patti’s mezza voice . . . People, held spellbound, would bend forward in breathless stillness as if fearful of losing a single note, and when she ended a long sigh preceded the frantic outburst of applause.”⁷² Take, for example a series of articles included in this chapter published in the late-Victorian period describing audience response to Patti’s performances of “Home Sweet Home.” This ballad captured contemporary feelings of nostalgia of Victorian maternal empathy and domesticity—especially when Patti sang from her middle and lower register. Patti’s dominance over the American social imaginary when singing “Home Sweet Home” resembled the mythology and almanacs of the hero of wilderness, Davy Crockett, published in the early- to mid-nineteenth century.

In her chapter “Davy Crocket as Trickster,” Carol Smith Rosenberg describes Crockett’s character as “the male bourgeois voice . . . of fathers and sons” and “the interaction between the individual and his community.”⁷³ Likewise, the piano girl represented the female bourgeois voice of mothers and daughters, and attempted to fulfill the fantasy of medicinal, spiritual, and artistic feminine deliverance when out in the

⁷¹ Cone, *Adelina Patti*, 199.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 204.

⁷³ Carol Smith Rosenberg, “Davy Crocket as Trickster: Pornography, Liminality, and Symbolic Inversion in Victorian America” in *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 89.

modern world. Stories of Patti's performance of "Home Sweet Home" worked toward redemptive ends: the audience felt safe and nostalgic even in the face of disturbances and dangers provoked by modern life. Patti attempted to feed bon-bons to six mice in her hotel room only to be woken up in the middle of the night being bitten by one of them. Rather than aggressing the animal as Crockett does, Patti lay down and allowed herself to be devoured as prey. Her only response to the attack—which she describes as "a sharp pain in [her] ear" and "blood trickling on the side of [her] cheek"—is: "I shall not put any bon-bons out tonight' . . . 'and when I sleep in the day time I shall place my maid to act as sentry.'"⁷⁴

Patti asserted a feminine healing of brute savagery against the worst animal instincts of humans. She used the piano girl as a voice and repertoire that soothed those controlled by nature, as compared to culture. With operatic vocal technique and skill as her artifice, Patti corrected the behavior of corrupted, or mentally unstable people disturbed by city living who were out to kill Patti or others. Articles written by *The Baltimore Sun*, "An Attempt to Kill Patti" and "The Crank Element in San Francisco," and the *Atlanta Constitution*, "Soothed by Song: How Patti Allayed the Fears of an Audience,"⁷⁵ detailed how panic arose from a bomb explosion during Patti's last concert of the season in San Francisco at the Grand Opera House. The crowd panicked, rose from their seats, and ran to the closest exit. The press rose to check if any threat remained as it hoped to protect the diva before welcoming her back to the stage. At that point, Adelina

⁷⁴ James H. Mapelson, *The Mapelson Memoirs: 1848–1888* (Chicago: Belford, Clarke, and Company, 1888), 302–03.

⁷⁵ Anonymous, "An Attempt to Kill Patti," *The Baltimore Sun*, February 11, 1887, 1; Anonymous, "The Crank Element in San Francisco," *The Baltimore Sun*, February 11, 1887, 2; Anonymous, "Soothed by Song: How Patti Allayed the Fears of an Audience," *The Atlanta Constitution*, February, 11, 1887, 1.

Patti began to sing “Home Sweet Home,” a perfect song to soothe the panic of the crowd, and to thwart a potential stampede: “This [song, “Home Sweet Home”] had a calming effect, and the concert was carried on to its conclusion.”⁷⁶ Patti was also portrayed as narrowly escaping a railroad crash that left several dead and injured.⁷⁷ She was also described as saving a new bride from murder at the opera, when “the would be murderer[’s] . . . hand sought the revolver . . . Just at that terrible moment Patti appeared upon the stage! . . . The matchless voice in all its purity and beauty touched his heart and had revived his better nature.”⁷⁸

The second series of articles dealt with Patti’s persona as a cosmopolitan diva, acting as hostess of her castle. Craig-y-Nos was “an edifice containing a large indoor conservatory, a clock tower, and a private theater, among other amenities.”⁷⁹ And, like *Odysseus*’s voyage, Patti’s adventure as the piano girl described the protagonist as adventuring through the wildness of the rough and dangerous terrain city through which the hero must travel, encountering magical spells, enemies, and monsters in order to get back home. Rather than reveling in the same wilderness spaces of Crockett’s bogs, pastures, rivers, and woods, Patti must have found some place worthy of both the middle-class morals of the piano girl and the wealthy class of the cosmopolitan diva. It must have been a place of opulence and domesticity which would still carry the aesthetic contrariety of the new moneyed class, not the older European traditions of taste.

⁷⁶ Anonymous, *Baltimore Sun*.

⁷⁷ Cone, *Adelina Patti*, 186.

⁷⁸ Baroness Von Zedlitz, “Illustrated Interviews: Madame Patti,” *Annie S. Swans Magazine: The Woman at Home Volume I*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894, 51.

⁷⁹ Hilary Poriss, “Divas and Divos,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 376.

American and British journalists from newspapers, music journals, and women's journals wrote avidly about Patti within her home environment at her castle in Wales. Similarly, newspaper and magazine articles about Patti's home were based on male standards of success and thus greatly differed from women's journals, which focused on altruism. For example, *The Harper's Bazaar* wrote about its visit to Craig-y-Nos purely to describe the diva's luxurious home.⁸⁰ The author made a list of Patti's material riches, gifts, and keepsakes from her royal audience members and other famous people. Koestenbaum refers to the diva having such trinkets or photographs in the following way: "Whether bonding or feuding, a diva is never alone; her solitude is peopled with reflections of herself."⁸¹ Perhaps the most apt description of Patti fashioning her castle as a tribute to herself was *The Harper's Bazaar's* article which described her remodeling a room with "a recess formed by the turret hung with crimson velvet, the center of which is occupied by a bust of Madame Patti supported on a pedestal."⁸²

Patti also appeared as a Victorian *hostess* and cosmopolitan diva in women's journals and women's column articles from Britain and America. In these genres, Patti's great wealth was featured as an opportunity for altruistic acts across international borders.⁸³ Even prima donna narratives in newspapers, journal articles, and biographical material began to portray her as an altruist. As an altruist, she went to great lengths to

⁸⁰ Anonymous, "Craig-Y-Nos Castle: The Home of Adelina Patti-Nicolini," *The Harper's Bazaar*, December 8, 1888, 838.

⁸¹ Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat*, 114.

⁸² Anonymous, "Craig-Y-Nos," *The Harper's Bazaar*, 838.

⁸³ Grace Potter, "How Adelina Patti Lives," *Beauty and Health*, February 1, 1904, 7, 5; Von Zedlitz, "Illustrated Interviews: Madame Patti," 42–51; Niel Wentworth, "Madame Adelina Patti as a Hostess," *The Ludgate*, December, 1899, 9; Marshall P. Wilder, "Adelina Patti: A Glimpse of Her Home Life," *The London Journal*, January 28, 1893, 19, 476; Florence Wilson, "A Day in Patti's Castle," *The Ladies' Home Journal*, May 1892, IX, no. 6, 1-2.

help individuals, families, communities, and charity organizations. Such narratives helped her accrue the symbolic capital of the prima donna. An altruist prima donna was “a person of wealth [who] provides for a member (or members) of the working poor, all for the benefit of an ‘audience’—the readers (who were assumed to be members of the middle class).”⁸⁴ Patti’s altruism was described precisely to “mediate the prima donna’s high status through the pauper’s low standing and bring these ‘divinities’ down to earth for their middle-class fans.”⁸⁵

Patti held charity concerts for local causes in Wales, such as the “Swansea General Hospital,” in August 1882. The diva was known as the “Lady of the Castle,” “Lady Bountiful,” and “Queen of Hearts” because she continuously gave to those in need: Patti paid for clothes and blankets for those who could not afford these necessities in nearby Welsh villages; she gave multiple charity concerts; and, she organized efforts within villages for households to offer and compensate for food and necessities to “beggars.”⁸⁶ Many of her comments perfectly aligned with sort of exaggerated flair of divaspeak, as in one instance where she described how the audience “in their delight tore their jewels from their arms and fingers, and threw them at my feet.”⁸⁷

As previously discussed, Craig-y-Nos aptly fit the image of the pastoral castle set in an ideal, inaccessible location that Americans could only retrieve in their imaginations. As such, the diva became accessible only as a memory of a past, premodern era, a

⁸⁴ Hilary Poriss, “Prima Donnas and the Performance of Altruism,” in *The Art of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Hillary Poriss (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 47.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Cone, *Adelina Patti*, 167.

⁸⁷ Von Zedlitz, “Illustrated Interviews,” 49.

perception that allowed her to cross back over from the modern to the sentimental. Leo Marx writes about the sentimental pastoral as part of the idyllic and fantasy of utopia that formulated the rhetoric of America as the “New World” and as a land of opportunity. However, he also warns of the isolationist logic of those who took the theory too literally: people who were part of the “localist” movement, or who moved from the city to the country to fulfill the fantasy of farming and “returning to nature,” to “freedom.”⁸⁸

Living in the pastoral scenery of Wales resonates with Marx’s description of the bourgeois “glossing over the distinction between the countryman who actually does the work and the gentleman (or poet) who enjoys rural ease. But the point, after all, is to idealize a rural way of life.”⁸⁹ These depictions arise out of a late-Victorian perspective, evoking notions of the pastoral as a *semi-primitivist* state. This motif may be productively compared to the *primitivist* state featured in Davy Crockett’s stories about *wild men* and *wild women* who chose to live as rugged individualists in place of drawing on their *birth rights*, family wealth, or continuing a family business or trade. Semi-primitivism works to show how the diva merged the two symbols of the piano girl and cosmopolitan diva to afford the luxury of being completely separated from city life and the noise of the modern era. In turn, she was able simultaneously to appear Victorian and altruistic as a foil for her massive wealth and aristocratic lifestyle.

This section has explored how Patti as a diva was embedded within the American imaginary much so as Davy Crockett. Patti was situated as a Victorian feminine version of a nature-bound adventurer. How did she sustain this image given the high demands of her vocal training and maintenance? As this next section explains, it was not just Patti’s

⁸⁸ Marx, *Machine in the Garden*, 99.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

repertoire that generated nostalgia in America. It was also her self-discipline for training her voice to resemble most closely the Francesco Lamperti empirical method of bel canto voice.

As the next section discusses, Patti's practices and values of self-care effectively contradicted the brutal historical tradition of the *castrati* that followed with the sadism of Primo Ottocento prima donnas. Primo Ottocento prima donnas took up masochistic practices as part of pastoral nostalgia of castrati who had forsaken their identities and consent, in exchange for castration, to reach idealized beauty with their operatic voices. In turn, Patti would refuse these masochistic practices to transition to technological nostalgia by unveiling the artifice of her craft, even though her highest notes had faded with age. Instead, she applied the *divine monster* as difficult, demanding, and capricious to act as practices of self-care. Though the diva never quite achieved the perfection of the castrati, she came as close as possible with an extreme amount of discipline and practice. Koestenbaum refers to the pains the diva endured to reach the castrati sound as "self-mutilation," an act that paralleled the diva's public battle with critics and audience members for her success and fame as a modern woman who controlled and contorted her body for the sake of art.⁹⁰

Francesco Lamperti: Empirical Bel Canto Vocal Training, the Castrati and the Primo Ottocento Prima Donna, and Practices of Self-Care

Patti's idealistic beauty and "pure tone" of singing—achieved through rigorous training—most closely resembled the Francesco Lamperti's empirical method of bel canto voice. Although Lamperti was not Patti's actual teacher, Giuditta Pasta had trained

⁹⁰ Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat* (New York: De Capo Press, 2001), 102.

both Lamperti and Patti's longtime teacher and coach, Maurice Strakosch.⁹¹ Pasta was a prima donna assoluta of the Primo Ottocento period (1800–1840), and had a voice much like that of the twentieth-century legend Maria Callas—"imperfect and unruly."⁹² Pasta's training method and vocal pedagogy came "by severe discipline and training."⁹³ To trace the history of how the old bel canto vocal pedagogy was practiced in Patti's era, this section looks to the castrati's sound and requisite level of artistic perfection. This level of perfection was *proven* through *pure tone* or *pure voice* passed on from the castrati to the succeeding generation of prima donna after the castrati had gone out of fashion in Europe. But the castrati's art would be a physical and artistic feat the prima donnas would never be able to completely achieve. Because of opera's impossible expectations, the diva would be trained by a series of bel canto vocal masters who would work hard to control, discipline, and manipulate the bodies of prima donnas and other singers to sound and perform as the castrati had.

The record of exactly with whom Patti studied during her childhood years—and to what extent—has never been reliably accounted for. As a result, multiple conflicting accounts exist.⁹⁴ Compounding this confusion, Lilli Lehmann described Adelina Patti as

⁹¹ Richard Somerset-Ward, *Angels and Monsters: Male and Female Sopranos in the Story of Opera* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2004), 154.

⁹² Pleasants, *Great Singers*, 141.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Maurice Strakosch, a singer, classical pianist, and composer who married Patti's sister, Amalia Patti, claimed he was Adelina Patti's sole teacher. Strakosch was both Adelina Patti's vocal coach and manager between the years 1850–1855 and again during 1857–1861, at the time of her operatic debut. Between this time, Patti claimed to have been taught by Ettore Barili solely in the years 1855–1857. Barili was the half-brother of her mother's first husband, a bel canto singer and teacher whose education and details of his pedagogy remain undocumented. Strakosch studied voice with, and was the main piano accompanist for, the famous Primo Ottocento diva, Giuditta Pasta, and taught Patti Pasta's vocal arrangements ("cadenzas and changes"), some of which you can still hear on Patti's late recordings. The closest that can be accounted for of Ettore Barili's technique is from his son, Alfredo Barili, who took up

“the greatest Italian singer of [her] time,” but also the least articulate prima donna about her technique.⁹⁵ Similarly, Francesco Lamperti was the closest to a vocal master whose own pedagogy was compatible with Patti’s anti-scientific process and a traditional aesthetic of bel canto.⁹⁶ Frank Tubbs, a voice student of both Lamperti and Garcia, described the two schools of bel canto this way: “At that time in the history of vocal method there were two distinct systems: one based on empiricism; the other on science. The first took into account sound of the tone and judged what would make it good; the other explained the scientific action which would produce good tone.”⁹⁷

The “sound of the tone” was what Lamperti had “bas[ed] his teaching upon [with] the study of respiration” and a “pure tone” of singing.⁹⁸ The “pure tone” relied physically on the singer’s “breath,” “by means of the abdominal muscles alone.”⁹⁹ This ideal of operatic voice originated with the castrati sound, which was produced through the altered voice of the castrated singer’s enormous rib cage paired with the small vocal cords of a

residence in Atlanta, Georgia, in the late nineteenth century, and Patti claimed continued with his father’s school of pedagogy. Adelina Patti, “The Art of Song, Yesterday and Today,” *The Independent*, March 17, 1904, 606–607; Herman Klein, *The Reign of Patti*. (New York: The Century, 1920), 384--387.

⁹⁵ “Although she was a Spaniard by birth and an American by early adoption, she was, so to speak, the greatest Italian singer of my time. All was absolutely good, correct, and flawless, the voice like a bell that you seemed to hear long after its singing had ceased. Yet she could give no explanation of her art, and answered all her colleagues’ questions concerning it with an ‘Ah, je n’en sais rien!’ (Ah, I do not know!)” Lilli Lehmann, *How to Sing* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), 6.

⁹⁶ Francesco Lamperti was born to an Italian prima donna in 1813, and he was considered the great nineteenth-century bel canto vocal pedagogue and professor from the Milan Conservatory. As an empiricist, Lamperti represented the most robust period of the Old Italian School of bel canto, and he was responsible for training the most renowned divas from the nineteenth century.

⁹⁷ Henry Tubbs, “Voice and Voice Culture,” in *The Encyclopedia Americana: A Library of Universal Knowledge Vol. 28* (New York and Chicago: The Encyclopedia Americana Corporation, 1920), 166.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

woman or child. This near-impossible feat of physical strength, breath control, power, and “purity” of voice was later expected of the prima donna.¹⁰⁰ Based on Patti’s recordings from 1905–1906, even in her older age of 62 and 63, respectively, we can hear the vestiges of what had been of her voice in its “pure tone” (no vibrato).¹⁰¹ Tubbs closed his comments on Lamperti’s process as “the Old Italian Method” within contemporary times of vocal pedagogy that, “in any degree of purity,” had been of the result of “Lamperti to those principles of breath control.”¹⁰² Lamperti had a reputation as an empirical vocal master from the old Italian bel canto tradition. Lamperti valued an older process of learning to sing bel canto, based on old Italian bel canto musicianship, correct breathing, and pronunciation. As an empirical vocal pedagogue, Lamperti did not believe in describing the process of learning to sing in anatomical terms, as vocal scientists did. When he did do so, his descriptions were confusing, vague, or just incorrect.¹⁰³ His method was highly disciplined without providing much reason to its manipulation, control, and discipline of students’ bodies. Some purists of operatic voice believed Manuel Garcia’s vision compromised traditional singing.¹⁰⁴ While Garcia’s scientific

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Shannon Wong Lerner, *Personal Interview of Monifa Harris* (Sacramento, California. June 15, 2016).

¹⁰² Tubbs, “Voice and Voice Culture,” 166.

¹⁰³ John Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), xxii.

¹⁰⁴ Before Garcia and his developmental work of vocal science, “authors of voice manuals were unable to describe their singing methods in objective, quantifiable terms” (Stark, xxi). Even if vocal scientist pedagogues, for example, attested to the “facts” of anatomy, vocal mechanics, and acoustics as the “correct” measure of vocal production, Stark explains: “The long history of virtuoso singing demonstrates the factor that scientific understanding of the voice has never been a prerequisite for becoming a good singer” (xxii). “Garcia’s scientific approach to vocal pedagogy had many detractors including G.B. Shaw (1932); Franklyn Kelsey (1950); Duey (1951); and Cornelius Reid (1950); and Carl Seashore (1932)” (Stark, *Bel Canto*, xxii).

theories and use of the laryngoscope used modern technology to develop the bel canto voice, Lamperti remained a strict traditionalist who fought against Garcia's innovations.

Lamperti's stern disciplinarianism was much like that of Patti's first teacher, Ettore Barili. Barili's son Alfredo recounted stories of such disciplinary measures through his piano lessons by his father.¹⁰⁵ Further, N. Lee Orr discovered from his archival research that a "pervasive family trait" was an "unrelenting perfectionism" that Patti carried through her entire career.¹⁰⁶ At this time, the press offered accounts of this high quality, pointing to their musical execution as a result of "'old world training,' and in the style of the 'grand old masters,' 'faultless performance,' or 'undisturbed elegance.'" These descriptions seem to point, in part, to this passionate commitment to perfect their preparation."¹⁰⁷ Parallel to the Barili-Patti tradition that Patti shared as part of her vocal training, Francesco Lamperti rallied for the revival of a "Golden Age" of traditional Italian bel canto. This Golden Age was when technique and repertoire merged to provide singers with proper vocal training material solely based on preparation for opera roles. The scores themselves trained singers, who learned the music of the "old masters."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ "I was always the first one up in the house . . . I would go downstairs to practice in a room which was under my father's bedroom. Sometimes I would get sleepy and stop playing. My father would then start banging on the floor of his room with his cane, which would awaken me and return me to work." Ettore inculcated into young Alfredo the same severe discipline that he had taught Adelina. N. Lee Orr, *Alfredo Barili and the Rise of Classical Music in Atlanta* (Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, 1996), 35.

¹⁰⁶ Ettore received his strong work-ethic from his "overpowering mother" and then passed it on to the Barilis and Patis. Orr explains that each one of the family members was "obsessed with faultlessly performing . . . Accounts of nearly every Barili-Patti performance from Caterina through the next three generations . . . relate how doggedly they worked in preparing their music." Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 35.

¹⁰⁸ Francesco Lamperti, "A Treatise on the Art of Singing," in *Historical Vocal Pedagogy Classics*, ed. Berton Coffin (Lanham, Maryland, and London: Scarecrow Press, 1989), 58.

In 1902 and 1903, Alessandro Moreschi, the last living castrato from the Sistine Chapel choir, made a series of recordings. Although, recording technology of that period lacks nuance, and the singer was older, these archives give a sense of how the castrato voice sounded. Thus, we can know more about the castrato technique, the demands of which were placed on the prima donna. John Rosselli explains that the castrati sound was produced of “an unusual vocal power, range, and length of breath” from the “enlarged thoracic cavity combined with an undeveloped larynx [that] allowed a mighty rush of air to play upon small vocal cords.”¹⁰⁹ Moreschi’s recordings convey the “pure” voice quality (without vibrato) with the effect of portamento or “literally ‘carrying.’” With this effect, the castrati moved “from one note to the next when the two notes span an interval greater than a third, and usually in intervals of a sixth or larger.”¹¹⁰

Naomi André explains that most contemporary listeners today are not accustomed to hearing the portamento of the castrati of the past, thus it can sound like “sobbing effects for the smaller intervals.”¹¹¹ Contemporary listeners might hear the “sobbing” effect as conveying sadness or pain; however, when the castrati were popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, portamento was combined with the power of their voices, especially in the upper register, creating the “bravura” style. When we hear portamento now, the castrati’s sobbing manifests for us not only the great sacrifices castrati were put under for the sake of art, but also the wounds of their loss of gendered identity. André also refers to the “sobbing” of the castrati as the precursor to the

¹⁰⁹ John Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera: The History of a Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 33.

¹¹⁰ Naomi André, *Voicing Gender: Castrati, Travesti, and the Second Woman in Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 19.

¹¹¹ André, *Voicing Gender*, 19

hardships of the diva. The wounds or trauma of this prepuberty mutilation for art's sake recalls Koestenbaum's reference to the diva's "self-mutilation" in preparing for a performance. For example, "before a performance, Maria Malibran took a pair of scissors and cut away the blisters around her mouth; Geraldine Farrar told Carl Van Vechten that 'at every performance she cut herself open with a knife and gave herself to the audience.'" ¹¹² The diva, in her process of becoming an opera singer, thus "operates on herself, reveals her body, exposes an indwelling secret . . . either call that secret a sign of health . . . or we consider her vocalism, her exposed element, to be an abnormality." ¹¹³ Patti could have surely followed the diva practice of self-mutilation for a pastoral nostalgic effect of the Primo Ottocento prima donna or the castrati; however, her stereotypical prima donna antics complemented technological nostalgia as a means of artifice to bypass pastoral nostalgia.

Prior to the prima donna, the castrati voices, as "altered voices," necessitated the ultimate sacrifice. ¹¹⁴ But the sound of the castrati was described as "extraordinary" and even divine—"at once powerful and brilliant." For example, the famous castrato Farnelli was believed to have "united this power and brilliance with highly-trained flexibility and a range said to be above three octaves (from C to D in altissimo)." ¹¹⁵ A woman from London once had exclaimed when hearing him sing, "One God, one Farnelli!" ¹¹⁶ The prima donnas of the Primo Ottocento period were also made into cult figures. One prima

¹¹² Koestenbaum, *Queen's Throat*, 102.

¹¹³ Ibid., 103.

¹¹⁴ Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera*, 33.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 30.

donna was martyred for her exceptional artistry, after a lifetime of suffering that only ended with her death.

Patti differed from the image of the diva as a self-sacrificing, Romantic ideal. Rather, she depended upon her art as an individual, using her role as the divine monster and acts of self-care. Although at first, her family imposed a strict regimen of vocal practice, she adapted this discipline as an adult. A key figure in United States opera, Clara Louise Kellogg, wrote avidly about such practices, frequently citing Patti as the prototype for Victorian work ethic and vocal training: “[Patti] . . . the care she has always taken of herself . . . Everything divided off carefully according to régime--so much to eat, so far to walk, so long to sleep, just such and such things to do and no others! And, above all, she has allowed herself few emotions. Every singer knows that emotions are what exhaust and injure the voice.”¹¹⁷

The precision of the coloratura voice enabled her to draw out notes for long periods. Thus, the coloratura singer had to go to great lengths to maintain her health. If Patti could be this meticulous in maintaining her voice, then why not impose these demands in every other part of her life? As Steven Connor explains: “Nothing else about me defines me so intimately as my voice, precisely because there is no other feature of my self whose nature it is thus to move from me to the world, and to move me into the world.”¹¹⁸

According to Martha Feldman, the castrati fell out of favor in the very late

¹¹⁷ Clara Louise Kellogg, *Memoirs of an American Prima Donna* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam’s Sons), 130.

¹¹⁸ Steven Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6, 7.

eighteenth century and during the time of the Primo Ottocento early nineteenth century because Europeans outside of Italy considered them unfavorably as having “unnatural” voices and bodies, leading to the castrati eventually becoming banned.¹¹⁹ At this time when the castrati left the stage and before the tenor had arrived, the prima donna was perceived as a great artist of her time and part of a “star system.” However, the prima donna was also stigmatized by musicians and critics, such as Hector Berlioz, who complained about the “freedoms” she took with the composer’s score. Berlioz referred to female opera singers of this era as “charming monsters,” holding them responsible for “the number of bastard works, the gradual degradation of style, the destruction of all sense of expression, the neglect of dramatic properties, the contempt for the true, the grand and the beautiful, and the cynicism and decrepitude of art in certain countries.”¹²⁰

Patti was one of the prima donnas Berlioz particularly abhorred, denigrating her as “a notoriously weak actress who callously ignored the dramatic aspects of an opera.” Moreover, she exploited the bravura/florid style to “ornament her musical lines beyond recognition, exhibiting a complete disregard for composers’ intentions.”¹²¹ The bel canto prima donna typically engaged in ornamentation or floridity to improvise and change scores, and to highlight the best parts of her voice. In her later years, Patti changed her repertoire to suit her lower register (and even transposed arias three keys lower). In doing so, she accommodated her age and changes in her instrument to preserve her health and to maintain her reign as diva on American stages.

¹¹⁹ Martha Feldman, *The Castrato: Reflections on Natures and Kinds* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015), 211.

¹²⁰ Susan Rutherford, ““La cantante delle passioni”: Giuditta Pasta and the idea of operatic performance,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 19 (2007): 115.

¹²¹ Poriss, “Divas and Divos,” 377.

But any sense of the prima donna's self-preservation and self-care was countered by conventional operatic narratives, which as Michel Poizat writes, often end in "death and sacrifice." He adds: "Finally, it is not at all clear why the woman cannot establish her dominion over opera simply as herself, why she can do so only if she is put to death or sends others to theirs, suffers herself or causes others to suffer."¹²² Patti's extravagance, arrogance, capriciousness, and, at times, childish behavior coalesced in her transition to technological nostalgia. Although negative descriptions were used for the divine monster, the unpleasantness of her character ended up productive for technological nostalgia. Patti acted as divine monster to preserve her voice and health as part of the embodied practice necessary for the diva to fulfill the artistic capabilities of her instrument in older age. This productivity contradicted the narrative of the prima donna's death and sacrifice for the pastoral nostalgia. To work through these limitations, Patti, as the late-nineteenth-century diva, used her individuality, and acted as the stereotypical prima donna to present the divine monster status as acts of technological nostalgia.

Conclusion: From Adelina Patti to Geraldine Farrar

The diva endured the burden of her identity and the stigma of being a woman circulating in public space at a time before an independent woman was the social norm. She also lived in a body that could not produce the same powerful breath and *purity* of voice of the castrati. The castrati had been *created* to perform as such, but the diva was also expected to carry these qualities for the operatic singing of older bel canto works. Such impractical pursuits of *perfection* caused prima donnas—especially those with coloratura voices such as Patti's—to center their lives around maintaining their voices.

¹²² Michel Poizat, *The Angel's Cry: Beyond the Pleasure Principle in Opera* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 156.

Rather than focusing on the diva's early career when she was in her prime, this chapter looked at the period when her voice was changing with age. Patti's fifty-year career was built upon the meticulous maintenance of her art, enabling her to draw upon a nostalgic repertoire that cued audiences to remember as a younger diva. In 1880s–1890s America, the myth of the diva leveraged the tension between the purity of voice of the castrati and the tireless hard-work ethic of the prima donna situated within nostalgia. By focusing on nostalgia, Patti's image as the stereotypical prima donna or divine monster differed from the Romanticist prima donnas (real and fictional) of the previous generation. The contrast helped audiences remember her through a more generative, sustainable, and individualistic practice of singing.

Geraldine Farrar was an American-born singing actress who reigned at the New York Metropolitan Opera House (the Met) from 1906 to 1923, and appeared beautifully as a thinner, younger version of prima donnas of the past. Patti had utilized the discipline of bel canto for a more popular and lucrative repertoire. However, Farrar had broken the glass ceiling completely for the prima donna by neglecting opera's reliance upon voice and favoring instead a visceral and energetic acting style. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the flappers of the 1910s and 1920s rebelled against their Victorian mothers of the late nineteenth century. In merging the piano girl with the cosmopolitan diva, Patti demonstrated the beginning of this transition away from deep-seated associations between women and home. To take these steps of independence further, Farrar continued with a sentimental archetype of the *plucky girl* from Alcott's *Little Women* alongside the *modern gender* of Bizet's *Carmen* to make way for the libidinousness and decadence of the Roaring Twenties.

CHAPTER 4: GERALDINE FARRAR, THE ULTRAPRIMITIVE LIMINAL OF CARMEN, AND THE PLUCKY GIRL

Geraldine Farrar, the 1910s, and Liminality

The conventional conception of a prima donna is that of a woman who is constantly swathed in cotton, timid and hating contact with actuality and life. It is a conception which, in connection with myself, I utterly abhor. I love action, danger, movement, life.¹

On February 17, 1916, the New York Metropolitan Opera House's (the Met) favorite prima donna, Geraldine Farrar, performed Bizet's *Carmen*, viciously attacking an unsuspecting chorus girl, and slapping the famous tenor Enrico Caruso. With this one event, Geraldine Farrar's vocality and artistic choices radically diverged from Michel Poizat's description of a soprano voice as the "angel" with a "pure cry."² But, as Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar write, "Women must kill the aesthetic ideal through which they themselves have been 'killed' into art,"³ a deed that—if she were there—Virginia

¹ Elizabeth Nash, *Geraldine Farrar: Opera's Charismatic Innovator* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2012), 148; Geraldine Farrar, "The Art of Acting in the Movies Requires a Technique Unlike that of the Operatic Stage," *Vanity Fair*, November, 1918, 90.

² Michel Poizat, *The Angel's Cry: Beyond the Pleasure Principle in Opera* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 137.

³ Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (Durham, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1980), 17.

Woolf might have recognized in Farrar, whom Woolf might have believed, wished to “kill” the “angel in the house.”⁴

Farrar was a singing actress not a vocal virtuosa like the Patti and Melbas of times past. Farrar’s era of the singing actress (as a lyric and energetic singer) was less concerned with the purity of voice. And, in keeping with this tack, she focused on keeping the “color,” otherwise known as “chiaroscuro,” of her voice, to feature not only the soprano or “higher range” but also the most expressive aspects of “middle” and “lower” ranges of the mezzo voice type.⁵ To traditional bel canto singers such as Enrico Caruso, Farrar’s mezzo range, fragmented line of bel canto voice, and preference for physical action and real emotion were obliterating the prima donna and opera itself. Instead of being referred to as *nightingale* with *birdlike* vocal qualities, or an *angel*, after the slap that was heard around the world, Caruso described Farrar’s stunt as “tiger-like tactics,” among other choice descriptions.⁶ Farrar’s move to modern media also corrupted the traditions of opera: Farrar braved the wilderness of early Hollywood to import what Caruso called its “antics” of realism and sensationalism into the otherwise-pristine stage of the Met. Mary Simonson writes of Farrar’s involvement with silent film as presenting the “corporeality of the divas, rendering their bodies and physicality as a crucial part of their public personae as their voices.”⁷ By enlisting acting techniques from film for opera—particularly in Farrar’s artistic choices as more physically emotive than

⁴ Ibid., 16-17.

⁵ Lilli Lehmann, *How to Sing* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), 61.

⁶ Geraldine Farrar, *Such Sweet Compulsion: The Autobiography of Geraldine Farrar* (Richmond, Virginia: William Byrd Press, 1938), 170.

⁷ Mary Simonson, “Screening the Diva,” in *The Art of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century*, eds. Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 85.

refined—the diva brought the technology of popular culture genres to a living theatrical performance.

Farrar’s frequent references to the importance of a singer’s “fitness” and concentration on physical movement signaled the demise of the sedentary Italian bel canto prima donna.⁸ In this physical turn, Farrar rejected the ways in which Patti and Melba relied on privileging the pure voice rather than on their acting or realistic characterizations of female roles. Farrar’s reflectivity of the real surroundings and situations of everyday women that were put on to female roles of opera directed the diva away from a belief that prima donnas didn’t belong in urban spaces, especially as competent, empowered working women.

For example, in 1920, Farrar wrote “A Great Singer’s Problem in Real Life and Fiction,” an article about three real women musicians. The article focused on Izola Forrester’s novel *The Dangerous Inheritance* in which the character Carlota, a young opera singer, sacrificed her progress for love when she was sent to New York to study with a vocal master.⁹ Farrar illuminated Carlota’s struggle between her *nature* as a future wife and mother and her potential part in *culture* as a great singer. With this dilemma, and through examples of three women musicians she knew, Farrar asked, “Are love and success compatible?” Farrar went on to describe three women’s lives whose musical careers afforded them great mobility for worldwide travel and living in urban spaces, and whose careers as singers were “so personal, so self-absorbing and sensuous an

⁸ Geraldine Farrar, “I Sacrifice Tonal Beauty to the Dramatic Fitness,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, April 15, 1911, 5; Geraldine Farrar, “How I Learned from a Goose to Get Thin,” *The Washington Post*, December 29, 1912, MS5.

⁹ Geraldine Farrar, “A Great Singer’s Problem in Real Life and Fiction,” *The New York Times*, December 26, 1920, 44.

indulgence.”¹⁰ Farrar focused in on the female body, and on the work necessary to become a great musician. When she weighed the work of domesticity and motherhood against that of musicianship, a “great singer who has married once” (who feasibly could have been Farrar) explained the benefits of worldwide travel and having a successful career instead of her married life. To that, she had to say, “Marriage is a serious problem, and doubly so for the woman artiste. Too often masculine domination influences the complete artistic independence.”¹¹ Rather than rendering the female body passive or docile in domestic life, the primary focus of the article is to reconfigure love and passion to make the woman opera singer’s body stronger, mobile, and prepared for travel and work in urban spaces.

At the start of the twentieth century—with vestiges of Victorian ideas of the passivity of the female body—much of the public was “convinced that modern life had depleted the nervous system of Americans, paralyzing their will and physique.”¹² These beliefs extended Victorian notions of female fragility and passivity, which confined women to unpaid domestic labor positions of mother, wife, and daughter rather than affording opportunities to work in the city. Through corporealized drama, resilience, and mobility, Farrar’s depiction of Carmen repudiated the idea of a passive female body, and the limitations put upon it by channeling her anger into the notorious “bad-girl” image of the role.¹³ Farrar resented a system that allowed the prima donna to wield a certain degree

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Simonson, “Screening the Diva,” 96.

¹³ David Schroeder, *Cinema’s Illusions, Opera’s Allure: The Operatic Impulse in Film* (London: Continuum Press, 2002), 105.

of control and empowerment on stage yet forbade her from transferring that strength to the struggle of her everyday life (for example, for a prima donna to have marriage or career); as such, she wrote avidly about how to connect the diva's agency by giving advice, both professional and personal, for young, aspiring women singers.¹⁴

With her infamous performance of Bizet's work, Farrar sought to shape the liminal role of Carmen as an independent, resilient, and socially mobile modern woman. Liminality, in this way, is a between state that occurs as part of rites of passage and, for our purposes, as pastoral liminality, tying the female body to her womanly cycles and normative social stages, such as a girl becoming an adolescent with a menstrual cycle, or going from a single woman to a married woman, eventually with children. For example, the women musicians Farrar described from "A Great Singer's Problem" with pastoral liminality would have already gone through their "rites of passage" and crossed the "threshold" as married women and mothers; however, with technological liminality, Farrar envisioned a different set of thresholds and rites-of-passage for the modern diva and women just entering the New Woman's public domain. Farrar's thresholds, then, involved the diva being able to expose her use of artifice with singing, her ideas, writing, and her role as a modern working woman.

At the "limen" or "threshold" between these rites of passage, the subject experiences temporary periods of time and space when he/she can exist outside of his/her social strata and act with abandon, uninhibited by concern for social stigma. As a

¹⁴ Geraldine Farrar, "A Great Singer's Problem in Real Life and Fiction," *The New York Times*, December 26, 1920, 44; Geraldine Farrar, "The Girl Who Wants to Sing: A Little Chat with Aspirants About Grand Opera," *Ladies' Home Journal*, October 31, 1914, 29; Geraldine Farrar, "What Must I Go Through to Become a Prima Donna?" *The Etude*, June 1, 1920, 367.

performer, the liminal subject can act as the “subjunctive” “as if”¹⁵ of identity (for example, one performs “as if” he or she were a different gender, a different race, a different class). Farrar, acting as Carmen, as a lower-class gypsy, a working woman, a tease, and a rebel, stood at liminality’s subjunctive “as if,” and gave early-twentieth-century women a sense of what complete freedom would look like for an empowered, modern woman. However, Farrar, beloved as an All-American, wholesome, hearty, and girlish diva, disclaimed any suggestions that her performance was immoral, but rather that it was part of her energetic, *plucky girl* New England disposition. These two personae—mobile modern woman versus plucky American girl—recalled tactics used by Lind and Patti to signal anxiety about the larger cultural shift from pastoralism to modernity, and to strategize and negotiate the presence of the successful modern woman.

Farrar was from the small New England town of Melrose, Massachusetts.¹⁶ Her father, professional baseball player Sidney D. Farrar, was already in the public eye. In 1899, after Farrar had a stint of vocal study on the East Coast, her parents packed up and left with her to Paris so she could further her studies.¹⁷ Farrar stayed in Berlin to sing with the Royal Opera house and obtained additional short-term contracts as a “special guest” for notable opera houses throughout Europe such as the Monte Carlo Opera House. Shortly thereafter, Farrar returned to the United States at the age of twenty-four. In 1906, Farrar would debut at the Met in the title female role of Gounod’s *Roméo et*

¹⁵ Victor Turner explains the liminal as being “dominated by the subjunctive mood of culture, the mood of maybe, might-be, as if, hypothesis, fantasy, conjecture, desire.” Victor Turner, “Are There Universals of Performance in Myth, Ritual, and Drama?” in *On the Edge of the Bush: Anthropology as Experience*, ed. E. Turner (Tucson: University of Arizona Press. 1985), 295.

¹⁶ Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 11.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 15–16.

Juliette.¹⁸ The marketing of Farrar's New England upbringing and childhood, her father's career as a baseball player, and her generally bold public image helped establish her affiliation with the plucky girl persona.

In Europe, Farrar met the prima donna Lillian Nordica and took her advice to study in Berlin, where she eventually met Lilli Lehmann, who would become her teacher for twelve years.¹⁹ Lehmann had impressive credentials from her long career as a prima donna assoluta of opera. Lehmann performed a remarkable number of roles for an opera singer—over one hundred seventy roles throughout her career—and, through her vocal and dramatical breadth, she applied these insights toward her vocal pedagogy. As an artist-teacher, Lehmann worked to pit the old Italian bel canto ideologies (Manuel Garcia II's vocal science as compared to Francesco Lamperti's empirical method) against one another to disprove that any fixed or finite vocal instruction could exist when sensation and artistic choice were not part of the process of learning to sing. For example, she took artistic processes into account led by the artist as an individual and only facilitated (not imposed) by the vocal teacher.

Unlike Adelina Patti, whose coloratura vocal pyrotechnics dazzled audiences in the 1860s and 1870s, Farrar used Lehmann's liberal modern teachings to focus on acting and honing realist characterizations of operatic roles. Farrar used Carmen, her signature role, to consummate her aesthetic. For her modern renditions of Carmen, she used the plucky girl persona to demonstrate the gradual evolution of a New England domestic girl into a technologically-savvy working girl.

¹⁸ Ibid., 17, 28.

¹⁹ Ibid., 28.

By definition, “pluck” is “a quality that makes you continue trying to do or achieve something that is difficult: courage and determination” or “courageous readiness to fight or continue against odds: dogged resolution.”²⁰ “Pluck,” although seemingly agentic, also carried the diminished title of “girl,” insinuating that the modern woman was not fully developed. However, this identity also had its advantages for a young woman, who could use her “girlishness” as an extension of the asexuality of childhood. For the plucky girl to transition from the pastoral liminal to the technologically liminal state, she evolved from one resembling the main character Jo in *Little Women* from the late nineteenth century—a sentimental, domestic, yet precocious and stubborn girl writer—to the independent, single, working woman of the early twentieth century, the plucky girl reporter. Technology was important for the plucky girl’s transition because both iterations were writers (like Farrar) who used the typewriter, a feminized object of technology allowing secretaries to record the words dictated by their male bosses.²¹ However, plucky girl reporters and Farrar activated the typewriter as feminine technology as a modern tool to write stories about their own adventures out in the world. Instead of the liminal time and space being defined for them, for example with rites of passage limited to their bodies transforming from menstrual cycle to menopause, or from a single woman to a married woman (in the patriarchally-driven passage of the woman from father to husband), Farrar as Carmen and the plucky girl created new ones with their intellect and ideas.

²⁰ “pluck, n,” *Merriam-Webster’s Learner’s Dictionary Online*: accessed May 26, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pluck>.

²¹ Kathleen F. McConnell, “The Profound Sound of Ernest Hemingway’s Typist: Gendered Typewriting as a Solution to the Problems of Communication,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 5, no. 4 (2008): 339.

Indeed, to Farrar, slapping Caruso was more than an outburst—it was an extension of the basic values embodied in her performance of Carmen. While it was easy to write off the slap as yet another example of the behavior of a diva, the blow reflected changing norms in America, including conventions and expectations around gender. The New Woman was another figure of the new era whose technology had partly helped to address the 1893 depression, and the “thousands of business bankruptcies and millions of hungry and angry unemployed men walking the city streets.”²² Ben Singer further describes the period of 1880–1920, in which the New Woman as industrious and progressive emerged, as a contrast to the depravity of the depression: “These decades saw the most profound and striking explosion of industrialization, urbanization, bureaucratization, military mechanization, mass communication, mass amusement, and mass consumerism.”²³ After the Spanish-American War of 1898, economic and industrial growth intensified as working women were being introduced to urban spaces.

When Farrar publicly slapped Caruso, she did so not just for dramatic effect on stage, but also as payback for decades of tenor bravado and tomfoolery. Caruso was known as a “prankster” of prima donnas with whom he shared the stage.²⁴ He had a

²² William Dean Howells described a sect of the “New Woman” as perceiving themselves as “selfish by tradition,” “generous by nature,” and “infinitely superior to their husbands in cultivation . . . [with these attitudes] more and more women were entering industry and business” (Mowry, 33). Also, industry and technology helped women work more: “The advance of the machine put less a premium on masculine muscle, and the presumed docility of women and their willingness to work for lower wages attracted industrial employers. The perfection of the typewriter and the rise of commercial education for women had meanwhile opened the doors to business offices” (Mowry, 33). “By 1900 one survey showed that 20 per cent of all women over the age of fifteen were gainfully employed; by 1910 the figure had raised to 25 per cent” (Mowry, 33). George E. Mowry, *The Era of Theodore Roosevelt: And the Birth of Modern America, 1900–1912* (New York: Harper and Rowe Publishers, 1962), 2.

²³ Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 18.

²⁴ Harold C. Schoenberg, *The Glorious Ones: The Lives of Classical Music's Legendary Performers* (New York: Times Books, 1985), 268.

reputation for publicly humiliating prima donnas during rehearsal—and, worst of all, during a live performance. In Monte Carlo during a 1902 production of *Bohème*, Caruso pressed a warm sausage into Nellie Melba’s hand during a performance, and whispered to her “English lady, you like sausage?”²⁵ Frances Alda, during Act I of *Bohème*, “felt the buttons of her pantalettes give way” because Caruso had cut the seams.²⁶ In one convincing swipe, Farrar let everyone know that Caruso was now aware of the diva’s reign and wrath for such humiliations.

The slap also reflected a significant aesthetic and intellectual shift in the early twentieth century when traditional ways of living and making art confronted the blunt “realism” of social problems.²⁷ For example, new operas exposed the American public to themes that were “more urban-centered, less limited to middle-class characters and themes, and more consciously environmental.”²⁸ Composed by Georges Bizet in France in 1875, *Carmen* fit comfortably within the setting of this new opera of the 1910s. Indeed, it was considered a new, controversial storyline and featured a set of characters unfamiliar to opera audiences in America.²⁹

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Alan Wagner, *Prima Donnas and Other Wild Beasts* (Larchmont, New York: Argonaut Books 1961), 228.

²⁷ George E. Mowry, *The Era of Theodore Roosevelt: And the Birth of Modern America, 1900—1912* (New York: Harper and Rowe Publishers, 1962), 31.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ In the United States, the New York Metropolitan Opera House originally took *Carmen* off its regular repertoire because of Maria Gay’s debut performance in 1908. Born in Catalan, an autonomous community of Spain that includes the Barcelona, Girona, Lleida, and Tarragona provinces, Maria was brought up familiar with the very communities of Roma people after which the Carmen’s character was figured. Gay’s Carmen ate an orange before singing the Habanera and spit out the seeds on stage. She threw orange juice at Enrico Caruso. *The New York Sun* reported, “Carmen was no lady—that she knew well—and she was going to show her as a common cigarette rolling Romany.” Anonymous, *New York Sun*, Date Unknown from Metropolitan Archives Online, accessed January 25, 2017, <http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/frame.htm>.

Carmen is radically modern, breaking with the conventions of opera's earlier provincial storylines.³⁰ The opera centers on the most proletariat of characters, meditating on themes important to these characters, such as lust and chaos, quite distinct from the pious love and social order that regulates characters of certain types of operatic tradition.³¹ *Carmen* narrates the tragic love story between the leading male character and his obsessive love for the fierce gypsy. Musicians and critics referred to *Carmen* as a "femme fatale" because she "loves like a man," and yet uses her femaleness, or female sensuality, to accrue power.³² *Carmen*'s vicious murder condenses opera's prevalent violence, offering a role that allowed the singer to fashion a breakout performance as a modern diva while also crafting her public image.

Americans considered *Carmen* an immoral opera character because of her exotic, Gypsy ethnicity and brazen sexuality;³³ however, Farrar attempted to whiten and refine *Carmen* with her simultaneous personae as an all-American girl, a wholesome woman, and yet still a glamorous diva. Farrar's whitening and refining *Carmen* as a plucky girl made Farrar seem fearless to speak up in the face of injustice. For example, Farrar fashioned her wholesomeness and yet pluckiness after Louisa May Alcott's popular sentimental novel *Little Women* (1868–1869)³⁴ or one of Horatio Alger's underdog

³⁰ J. Merrill Knapp, *The Magic of Opera* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 231.

³¹ McClary, *Carmen*, 70.

³² Ibid.

³³ Hervé Lacombe explains: "In spite of its comic and 'Spanish' scenes, *Carmen* was undoubtedly one of the first operas to use exoticism in striving for a profound expression of the Other. *Carmen*, the Gypsy, proclaims that she is different and leads her life of difference in the midst of, and in spite of, everything around her" (205). Hervé Lacombe, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century* trans. Edward Schneider (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

³⁴ Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (New York: Puffin Books, 2008).

heroes.³⁵ Within a male-run industry, centered on a star system comprised of mostly women performers, divas as strong women with agency were expected to operate as fantasy figures on the stage. Divas were typically forced into the limelight for interviews, public appearances, and other star activities. Farrar took the diva as a star to a new level by not becoming subservient to its allure as merely a prima donna or even as a Hollywood starlet, but rather by questioning the terms to which women committed when they circulated in the star system. Discussing similar tactics, Farrar was the plucky girl who had taken on several of opera's heavy hitters: Gatti-Casazza, the manager of the Met;³⁶ Arturo Toscanini, the reigning conductor of Europe and America (and perhaps the world at the time);³⁷ and Enrico Caruso (the Golden Voice, possibly the most famous tenor ever). She also challenged her nationalistic duty to the United States to stay a neutral party by appearing to take the side of Germany in a letter that resurfaced during WWI.³⁸ Dizikes explains that these actions "gained her a good deal of hate mail, but also respect. She represented nonconformity, rebellion against authority."³⁹

³⁵ Horatio Alger, *Ragged Dick; And, Struggling Upward* (New York: Penguin, 1985).

³⁶ When Farrar was still new to the Met in 1908, she headed a petition against the European-born Gatti-Casazza's appointment to The New York Metropolitan Opera House, instead supporting the American-born Andreas Dippel, who was co-serving as manager at the time. Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 122, 124; Farrar, *Such Sweet Compulsion*, 113-114.

³⁷ From 1911–1915, Farrar carried on an affair with Arturo Toscanini, the legendary conductor, and gave him an ultimatum to divorce his wife and leave his children, or she would leave him. The legendary rumor was: Toscanini was so shaken by the ultimatum that he fled New York back to Italy with wife and children in tow, leaving his appointment with the Met midterm. The speculation of their affair was widely written about in the newspapers. Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 58.

³⁸ In 1907, a letter between Farrar and Lilli Lehmann surfaced that brought into question the diva's patriotism. At this time, Farrar pleaded with the public for forgiveness, provoking a melodramatic headline from the *Los Angeles Times*: "Has Wept Many Weeps: Geraldine Farrar Denies Stories of her Criticism of America's Lack of Art." In 1915, the press republished this same personal letter between Farrar and Lehman written in 1907, in which she lauded German culture and arts while making anti-American statements about its lack of significant art and culture. During WWI, the public was in an uproar over Farrar's comments when the letter was republished by *Musical America*, and the Chicago Grand Opera in 1915 petitioned against her guest appearance. Eight years earlier, Farrar had inadvertently disobeyed

Indeed, not everyone was happy about Farrar's visibility in the public venue outside of the opera stage. One critic from *The Musical Courier* expressed his disapproval: "Who is Farrar after all? . . . Who cares whether Miss Farrar thinks one way or the other? The object of Miss Farrar should be to sing and to act and to do her duty under the contract, and the more she talks, the worse for her voice. She ought to follow the example of Adelina Patti and keep silent and sing well."⁴⁰ Farrar's behavior ignited debate about issues of class, generation (the older elite as compared to the younger "diverse" generations of opera-goers), and gender. Responses revealed outrage about violations of opera culture (and the need to silence prima donnas). While this critic might have belonged to the avant-garde or the super-elite audience base centered on Richard Wagner's operas, Farrar garnered her support from verismo—the realist Italian-generated compositional approach she used for *Carmen* for her acting—which also formed a "diverse" community of operagoers. Verismo translates from Italian as "'real' or 'truthful' opera libretti that feature ordinary people—as opposed to historical subjects or

President Wilson's future orders repeated by the director Giuseppe Campanini. 'that Americans should think, talk and act neutrality in the matter of the European War' (Fryer, 33). Farrar pleaded with the public for forgiveness, provoking a melodramatic headline from the *Los Angeles Times*: "Has Wept Many Weeps: Geraldine Farrar Denies Stories of her Criticism of America's Lack of Art"; Paul Fryer, *The Opera Singer and the Silent Film* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2005), 33; "Miss Farrar's Pro-German Talk Stirs Chicago," *The New York Times*, op. cit. (Robinson Locke scrapbook, vol. 187, NYP Performing Arts).

³⁹ John Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 403.

⁴⁰ Paul Fryer, *The Opera Singer and the Silent Film* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2005), 28; Anonymous, editorial section, *Musical Courier* 57, New York, December 19, 1908, 20.

great literary figures—who find themselves in dangerous, violent, or life-threatening situations.”⁴¹

Farrar was fascinated by the great shifts taking place in women’s professional and artistic roles, in particular for the character of the prima donna. For example, Farrar’s own amateur Egyptology study about Carmen was recorded in an interview, “The Psychology of Carmen,”⁴² featured in the new literature journal *The Bookman*. In her interview, Farrar compared *Carmen*’s story to an ancient order of Egyptian female priestesses of Thoth, who could foresee the future to give prima donnas foresight to speak and act in a modern fashion. Just as Farrar posited Carmen as a descendent of priestesses who saw her fate in her fortune cards, when Farrar performed Carmen as wild, emboldened, and modern, prima donnas could access the possibilities of a new acting style for opera. In turn, women audiences might have been able to see possibilities for how to empower themselves in difficult or dangerous situations that were part of their new freedoms. The New Woman,⁴³ in Farrar’s hands, was a liberal, modern prima donna intoxicated by the splendor that is verismo drama—and through her performances, she

⁴¹ I wish to distinguish here *Carmen* as part of the genre of French opéra comique, as compared to verismo as a late, Italian-generated compositional approach that was popular with European opera in the 1890s and 1900s. Verismo, then could be used for a particularly visceral style of acting Farrar took up when showcasing Carmen as a role for American audiences. Matthew Hoch, *A Dictionary for the Modern Singer* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2014), 186.

⁴² Geraldine Farrar, “*The Psychology of Carmen*,” *The Bookman* 42, no. 4 (December 1915): 412–17.

⁴³ The “New Woman” was fraught with contradiction. She represented the domestic ideals of the “Cult of True Womanhood.” She might solve the ills that issued from a patriarchal, modern world. She was “reform-minded,” of the “progressive period,” concerned with issues of “the protection of minors, and in such moral crusades against liquor and prostitution.” Thus, the “New Woman” took up “women’s rights, women’s suffrage.” Mowry, *Era of Theodore Roosevelt*, 36. Whereas another side of the “New Woman” otherwise known as the “female bachelor” partook in single women’s modern lifestyle of open sexual escapades, drinking, smoking, and leisure activities during their free time as theatre, exercise, and opera.

could embody multiple selves. Thus, Farrar suggested that contemporary prima donnas might have inherited the spirit of Carmen for just such purposes.

Farrar defined herself as the New Woman at the liminal space of the plucky girl caught between the pastoral and modernity. This middle space also existed within Bizet's Carmen—a woman of nature with sensuality and wildness, her signature color red a symbol of passion and perhaps also blood or danger. Yet, as Farrar mixed with the plucky girl, she also navigated urban spaces as a working woman and performer legible to early-twentieth-century women audiences as a heroine of modern gender. Farrar used Carmen to reinvigorate opera and bel canto, and to introduce the New Woman to elite spaces like the Met. Carmen's popular appeal blended with Farrar's public image, as she had to negotiate two contrasting female personae.

The Middle Space of Liminality, Ultraprimitivism, and the Plucky Girl

Arthur O. Lovejoy explains primitivism as a cultural “belief of men living in a relatively highly evolved and complex cultural condition that a life far simpler and less sophisticated in some or in all respects is a more desirable life.”⁴⁴ While the diva of the previous generation labored to forge the middle space of the garden (when industrialization and technology peaked in the United States in the 1910s), Farrar issued a plea for the diva to leave her safe haven. Such a plea was part of an extreme version of primitivism known as *ultraprimitivism* and *animalitarianism*, which had “the tendency to represent the beasts—on one ground or another—as creatures on the whole more admirable, more normal, or more fortunate, than the human species.”⁴⁵ Leo Marx's

⁴⁴ Arthur O. Lovejoy, “Prolegomena to the History of Primitivism,” in *A Documentary History of Primitivism and Related Ideas*, ed. Arthur O. Lovejoy et al., (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), 7.

“middle space” between the primitivist and pastoralist provides a useful depiction of where Farrar’s intervention took place. As he explains, the primitivist “hero keeps going, as it were, so that eventually he locates as far as possible, in space or time or both, from organized society.” The pastoralist, “the shepherd, on the other hand, seeks a resolution of the conflict between the opposed worlds of nature and art.”⁴⁶ As ultraprimitivist, Farrar’s animals—tiger, wildcat, or as bestial—embodied “desires [that] are limited to their ‘natural’ needs and not, like man’s expansive and insatiable; . . . if some of them are undeniably predatory and carnivorous . . . their native physical vigor and bodily endowments are greater and have not been sapped by luxury and medication.”⁴⁷ Farrar’s middle space offered a transition site from the pastoral to the technological to allow the diva to escape the confines of the countryside and embrace the primitive aspects of her body, of nature, and of technology. As Carmen *and* the plucky girl, Farrar took an ultraprimitivist stance to awaken the strength of beasts and allow for a more physically robust and resilient version of the prima donna who could thrive in natural and urban spaces alike.

Victor Turner traces the word liminality to the Latin *limen*, meaning “threshold” and “margin.” The term derives from French ethnologist Arnold van Gennep.⁴⁸ Turner refers to liminality as defined by van Gennep as a “transition between,” a “rite of passage,” as well as “rituals accompanying an individual’s or a cohort of individuals’

⁴⁵ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁶ Marx, *Machine*, 22.

⁴⁷ Lovejoy, *Primitivism*, 20.

⁴⁸ Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982), 24.

change in social status.”⁴⁹ As Farrar adopted contrasting perceptions of the New Woman, her liminality became reconfigured as “rites of passage” and as a “transition between” changing social roles for women in American public culture. Thus, the New Woman that Farrar reflected became an emblem of resilience, robust athleticism and agency, and rebelliousness—in essence, a figure who could thrive in such urban spaces.

These myriad qualities of the New Woman presented a stark contrast to the private, domestic assignments of the previous generation’s women, relegated as they were exclusively to traditional rites of passage: birth, marriage, childbirth, and death. In a feminist study on liminality challenging boundaries of women’s new public domain—including the early twentieth century—Janet Wolff speaks of the captivity of women’s “bounded areas and their exclusions,” raising questions about the “shifting of boundaries, the negotiation of spaces and the contradictory and open-ended nature of urban social practices.”⁵⁰ Ben Singer also characterizes the period of 1880–1920 as one that saw ‘a series of sweeping changes in technology and culture [that] created distinctive new modes of thinking about and experiencing time and space.’⁵¹

When Farrar performed Carmen, she used physicalism to create the technological liminal. Through Carmen’s sexuality, Farrar sought to show that she would not perpetuate the pastoral tradition of divas tamed by paternal structures which, in turn, fostered women’s dependence. The pastoral liminal was part of the roles of Carmen and

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Teresa Gomez Reus and Terry Gifford, eds., *Women in Transit Through Literary Liminal Spaces* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Janet Wolff, foreword to *Inside Out: Women Negotiating, Subverting, Appropriating Public and Private Space*, ed. Teresa Gomez Reus and Aranzazu Usandizaga (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 15.

⁵¹ Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 19; Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 1.

the plucky girl, who were bound to the realm of nature; however, the technological liminal went outside the bounds of nature that rendered women's bodies passive to its natural immediacy. Instead, Farrar used the technological liminal to activate the diva's artifice, her work, skill, and mastery of voice and acting—to show she had created a liminal “threshold” with her performances to create her own rites of passage. These new rites of passage imbued Farrar with a resilient female body able to withstand dangerous terrain and myriad situations in nature and the city. These new rites of passage also allowed her to exaggerate her physicalism to both flaunt her artifice as well as embolden the modern diva with the physical strength that derived from the ultraprimitivism of her animalistic side.

As the plucky girl, Farrar, in turn, embodied women personae of multiple identities, backgrounds, locations, and time periods to take up behaviors derived from women's sentimental literature such as *Little Women*. With the plucky girl described in newspaper articles, women of any class, age, marital status or location could take up acts of heroism and bravery. Besides her flux of identity, another reason this plucky girl was liminal was that the events newspapers described were sometimes momentary lapses from one's otherwise genteel social code as a middle- or upper-class woman whose standing was necessary to deal heroically with a threat of some kind.

Much like Farrar's infamous performance of slapping Caruso, plucky girls put themselves in dangerous situations in which they needed to fight back against men who were physically stronger than them or against treacherous conditions. Farrar fortified the diva's transition from the premodern to modern state through the liminal trope of the two personae of Carmen and the plucky girl. According to Gomez, Rues, and Gifford,

“Movement, transition and enclosure” intervene into “unstable meanings of public and private space” while temporary periods of liminal intervention held no social and cultural repercussions for Farrar between the two contrasting personae.⁵² Farrar strategically adopted the image of the plucky girl as a sexually-ambiguous and energetic persona to gloss over the insatiability, sensuality, and violence of Carmen that she performed in film, on stage, and about which she wrote and spoke in interviews and self-authored articles about Carmen.

Performing Carmen as the New Woman and Farrar’s Plucky Writing

In the 1910s, as the modern diva, Farrar⁵³ transitioned from pastoral liminality to technological liminality to construct the modern gender of the New Woman. The modern diva accurately presented the New Woman as an example of women’s physicality and mobility, never downtrodden or destroyed by technology. Writing in 1908, Filson Young told the story of the diva’s voice succumbing to the destructiveness of urban space and technology’s ravages on health and well-being. Indeed, Young explained that, while seeking to transition her voice from its live craft to early recordings of the gramophone, Nellie Melba underwent such a destructive transition: “I fear the gramophone, like the motor-car, has come to stay. There is hardly a country house in England, in which, straying unsuspectedly into some tapestried gallery, or some vaulted hall, you are not

⁵² Teresa Gomez Reus and Terry Gifford, eds., *Women in Transit Through Literary Liminal Spaces* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1.

⁵³ Two other modern divas worth mentioning were part of Farrar’s category. Italian soprano Lina Cavalieri was the first opera diva to appear in silent film in Italy and the United States and was called “the most beautiful woman in the world” (Fryer, 1). Mary Garden also appeared in silent film at the same time as Farrar and performed fin-de-siècle roles as Thaïs as an exotic, courtesan dancer by Goldwyn Motion Picture Company in 1917. Garden performed Thaïs with a physical and emboldened aesthetic similar to Farrar’s *Carmen*. Paul Fryer and Olga Usova, *Lina Cavalieri: The Life of Opera’s Greatest Beauty, 1874–1944* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2004); Simonson, “Screening the Diva,” 86–87.

liable to be confronted by the sight of a monstrous trumpet, sitting on a table and emitting, after initial rasp and buzz, the loud nasal travesty of Melba's heavenly voice."⁵⁴ Young wrote further about Melba's participation with early recording as part of his dislike of technologies, such as the motor-car, and their disruption of English pastoral landscapes and homes. According to Young, in allowing her voice to be recorded, Melba interrupted the part of her voice that symbolized the peaceful English pastoral landscape, and thus, distorted the diva's "heavenly voice" beyond recognition. Contrary to Young's interpretation, however, when audiences saw Farrar transition from stage to film (and before that, from stage to recording), they accepted this modern turn. Indeed, because of Farrar's already-established presence as a star in mass media, and her energized and extemporaneous acting style with opera, the transition wasn't as shocking or disturbing to audiences.

Carmen was already known as a figure of liminality—her actions shocking and transgressive. Carmen is an outlier, a liminal woman whose identity cannot be fixed. Farrar employed the unpredictability of Carmen's character in her performances to raise questions about the New Woman's limitations. For example, Carmen had been married, but is a working woman, too. She is not against family, because she mentions her family. She isn't only from the country (her home) because she ends up living in the city with the toreador Escamillo. However, she also lived in the wilderness when she was a bandit.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ John Brownlee, "Melba and I," in *Nellie Melba: A Contemporary Review*, ed. William R. Moran (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985), 444–45; Filson Young, *Saturday Review* 37 repr. (London: Saturday Review Associates, 1954), 35.

⁵⁵ I owe an acknowledgment and thanks to vocal pedagogue Monifa Harris for our discussion about Wagner's music as compared to Bizet's opera, *Carmen* and liminality to help inform this section. Shannon Wong Lerner, *Personal Interview of Monifa Harris* (Sacramento, California. October 1, 2016).

Carmen fairly proclaims her liminality in her famous line at the start of the “Habanera.” *Carmen*’s famous aria of the “Habanera,” “Love is a rebellious bird,” is the diva’s grand entrance and starts with the soldiers who plead, “Carmencita, when will you love us?” Carmen responds, “Quand je vous aimerai? Ma foi, je ne sais pas. Peut-etre jamais, peut-etre demain; mais pas aujourd’hui, c’est certain.” (When I’m going to love you? My word, I don’t know. Perhaps never, perhaps tomorrow; but not today, that’s certain.)⁵⁶ In the “Habanera,” Carmen speaks the famous line: “Si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime.” (If you do not love me, I love you.) This proclaims Carmen as modern diva, a woman of multiplicity and adaptability, eternally free in sex and love. As soon as a man loves her, she is no longer interested; she makes her own decisions and determines her own destiny. Off stage, Farrar was beloved by the public, whose affection facilitated her passage from opera to film and popular culture. Residing in this liminal space, Farrar crossed back and forth, importing new, cinematic acting techniques that energized her performances on the opera stage.

As an ultraprimitivist, Farrar could take her most animalistic gestures, movements, and use of voice to push through the middle space that previously held expectation for a woman’s passivity, and instead create a new space for the diva’s active physicality between verismo performance technique and the shooting location and increased space for women roles within film. Similarly during the approach of the industrial era in the United States in the late eighteenth century, Leo Marx describes Jefferson’s political dialectic as a “constant need to redefine the ‘middle landscape,’ pushing it, so to speak, into an unknown future to adjust it to ever-changing

⁵⁶ Georges Bizet, “Liner Notes” in *Carmen* (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 2005), page n.a.

circumstances” including the “abstract embodiment of the concept of mediation between the extremes of primitivism and what may be called ‘over-civilization.’”⁵⁷ In order to balance wilderness and city, to steady these extremes, the ultraprimitivist pushed against both of them as an exercise to strengthen her body and character, and to exercise her sexuality and femininity.

Carmen’s liminal role has both etymological and historical meaning in comparison to pastoral themes. Ninotchka Devorah Bennahum explains that, in Spanish, Carmen “means villa or country house, a residence that stands between town and country, between culture and nature, between civic and metaphor.” She stands “for savage existence.”⁵⁸ In these terms, Farrar as Carmen—both in film *and* in opera—“occupies no fixed point in space,” has a “restless nomadism and defiant identity, [and] fatigues anyone who would attempt to arrest her and hold her as an object.”⁵⁹ Carmen’s liminality depends on her ferocity, her restlessness and indefinability, and her insatiable female sexuality. As soon as her lovers think they have figured out Carmen, she surprises them—or betrays them.

Mary Simonson describes Farrar’s cinematic diva as impactful on female viewers who faced struggles similar to those of the modern characters she interpreted and performed. Although Farrar first performed *Carmen* at the Met in 1914, her performance was not exciting, fresh, or new until after she performed it for film. At the end of Chapter 5, I present a comprehensive discussion of Farrar’s *mediatized to live* interaction with

⁵⁷ Marx, *Machine in the Garden*, 139–40.

⁵⁸ Ninotchka Devorah Bennahum, *Carmen: A Gypsy Geography* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2013), 9.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

Carmen, including how her work with the filmic medium electrified her performance when she returned to the Met. As Jennifer Bean says of Farrar as a new resilient woman celebrity in early silent film: “Her persistence in the face of ceaseless catastrophe raises the threshold of commonly held psychical, physical, and conceptual limits of human mobility.”⁶⁰ Farrar thus brought the sensationalism, physicalism, and violence of her screen presence to the opera stage when she slapped Caruso and roughed up an unsuspecting chorus girl.

Author Willa Cather described Geraldine Farrar as part of her article “Three American Singers” as having “the kind of story that Americans like,” including “a large element of ‘luck,’” and a “rich endowment, native ‘gift,’ fame in early youth.”⁶¹ Farrar was the diva for the everyday American, a “mining-camp ideal . . . that the ranchman or the miner can understand.”⁶² Farrar fashioned herself through multiple outlets of popular culture including journals, newspapers, and books as a writer, early silent film, and recording, all while maintaining her respect with opera audiences and musicians. While Patti’s voice was nostalgic for the Victorian era as a symbol of America’s past, Farrar, as Cather wrote of her modern style and youth, was “rich of tomorrows.”⁶³ Cather’s description of Louise Homer, Geraldine Farrar, and Olive Fremstad as American singers who were the singers of the future enhanced Farrar’s interpretation of both old and new operatic roles. By describing Farrar’s interpretation of opera’s roles as American, Cather

⁶⁰ Jennifer Bean, “Technologies of the Early Stardom and the Extraordinary Body,” *Camera Obscura*, no. 48, (2001): 29–30.

⁶¹ Willa Cather, “Three American Singers,” *McClure’s Magazine*, XLII, no. 2, December, 1913, 36.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 40.

also articulated Farrar's artistry as nationalistic, transitioning operatic singing from its origin of a European art into an American one.

Farrar energized the women's new public domain with her modern interpretations of female opera roles. As Ben Singer explains: "Whereas few modes of public experience were acceptable for an unaccompanied woman in the Victorian era, the years between 1880–1920 generated a new conception of the woman's legitimate domain."⁶⁴ For example, 10 percent of women were working in paid labor in 1880, and this number had doubled to 20 per cent by 1910 "or even tripled, if one looks at the urban population." By 1910, "40 percent of young single women worked for several years before marriage. And the figure was probably over 60 percent in urban areas."⁶⁵ Department stores and entertainment at "music halls, amusement parks, movie theatres" catering to women's increased mobility boosted sales.⁶⁶ Farrar's biggest fans, the "Gerryflappers" represented a demographic of women who partook in these forms of entertainment and new consumer goods.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 240.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 241.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ The "Gerryflapper" was a member of a group of devoted fans who worshipped, emulated, and were devoted to Geraldine Farrar, first within the United States, and then worldwide. Girls who associated themselves with Geraldine Farrar were defined by the *New York Sun's* music critic, W. J. Henderson thusly: "What is a Gerryflapper? . . . Simply a girl about the flapped age who has created in her own half-baked mind a goddess which she names Geraldine Farrar" (Fryer, *Opera Singer*, 24; Henderson, *New York Sun*, 920, n.p., qtd. in Harold C. Schoenberg, "The Goddess that was Geraldine Farrar," *New York Times*, March 19, 1967, sec II, p. 21, col. 5.). Building up until this point of the "Gerryflapper," the director of the Met, Gatti-Cazazza referred to Farrar as the "'pet child' to the public all of whom seemed to adore her, but perhaps not as much as the young generation of women who perceived of Farrar as the 'Great Glamour Girl of her era.'" Peter G. Davis, *The American Opera Singer: The Lives and Adventures of America's Great Singers in Opera and In Concert From 1825 to the Present* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 112–13. Mary F. Walkins wrote in the *Woman's Journal* that "the thing grew into a cult . . . the demonstrations at her performances attained the distinction if not the dignity, of a rite." A "Gerryflapper" was named after the "flapper" (only Geraldine Farrar specific), who earned her name following World War I when women wore

Farrar tapped into new markets supported by women's newfound mobility.⁶⁸ These forms of women's popular culture included fashion, self-betterment, and "home" journals about homemaking.⁶⁹ Appearing in "home" sections of newspapers, women's journals, and in women's magazines such as *Vogue* during the years 1906–1920, Farrar worked a publicity campaign that focused on creating a chic yet wholesome image. Simonson explains that Farrar's presence in the film *Carmen* had just such an impact on screen: "Not just the working-class and immigrant audiences who regularly watched serial film, but middle-and upper-class viewers." Simonson explicates how this impact would "thereby expos[e] (if not pitch) this vision of the 'New Woman' to an expanded group of viewers."⁷⁰ The "New Woman," Simonson concludes, was "a set of evolving female identities that rebelled against Victorian gender roles and hierarchies."⁷¹ As such, Farrar's performance likely opened possibilities for women to enter new territories of modern gender.

In contrast to Farrar's efforts of sustaining opera as a popular art with realistic characterizations, some scholars blame the popularity of Wagner's music at the time for pushing opera from the popular realm to merge opera and popular culture. Richard Wagner's music had transformed opera in the 1880s into an elite genre, effecting the

"flapping" unbuckled galoshes in support of social protest movements and in defiance of conventions of dress from previous generations of women. Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 16.

⁶⁸ Phil Powrie et al., *Carmen on Film: A Cultural History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 42.

⁶⁹ Geraldine Farrar, "Geraldine Farrar's Advice to Aspiring Singers," *Good Housekeeping* 53 (1911), 13–19.

⁷⁰ Simonson, "Screening the Diva," 94.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 100.

“sacralization,” “capitalization,” or “commodification” of opera.⁷² Lawrence Levine writes of the time when wealthy members of the opera communities used the avant-garde to maintain their separation from and superiority over popular culture.⁷³ *Carmen* was and continues to be perhaps the only opera loved by lay-opera audiences and well-respected by musicians alike. Further, *Carmen* has become the most reproduced character in film (after *Dracula*), and leveraged a short-lived but important period in cinema history between opera and popular culture.⁷⁴

Wagner’s dissonant harmonies of avant-garde, and lengthy, costly productions

⁷² Author David T. Evans from his book *Phantasmagoria: A Sociology of Opera* writes from the perspective of conductor and author Will Crutchfield: “The cessation of melody pretty much finished opera off as far as any chance to a broad public was concerned, and the extreme dissonance of the advanced modernists sealed the file.” David T. Evans, *Phantasmagoria: A Sociology of Opera* (Brookfield, United Kingdom: Ashgate/Arena 1999), 178–79.

Although Horowitz does not characterize Wagner’s music as complete capitalization, he has described atonal music as participating in the “‘sacralization of art’ and this was ‘the work of . . . ‘cultural capitalists,’” or that by the 1880s, upper-class New Yorkers “‘had created a set of cultural institutions they clearly dominated and in which they set class-specific aesthetic standards, most prominently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Opera, and the New York Philharmonic,” or that these institutions “‘derived their programmatic ideas” from the upper classes, and “‘principally catered to the city’s economic elite.” Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of Its Rise and Fall* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2005), 251.

In 1882, the opera *Parsifal* was protected within a thirty-year agreement for copyright to be released in Bayreuth, “the exclusive site of its performance: the sacred opera at the sacred shrine.” However, the United States didn’t acknowledge this copyright and thus released the opera in 1903 through Heinrich Conried at the New York Metropolitan Opera House. Conried took advantage of the Wagnerian hype surrounding *Parsifal* and raised orchestra seats to ten dollars a seat; they hadn’t been that high since Patti’s first tour in 1881. A train just for the occasion called “The Parsifal Express” took Wagnerians from Chicago to the Met. “The lavish production, ‘the most perfect ever made on the American stage,’ ‘better than Bayreuth,’ received ten repetitions, all sold then, balked at the ‘poor and pretentious pietism’ that took away ‘every breath of fresh air from the musical atmosphere.’” Mark Twain “mocked the pseudo-spirituality of the place, while Henry Adams, who had hoped to find in Bayreuth the ‘out of the world, calm, contemplative, and remote’ spirit of the Master, found something very different. ‘The world had altogether changed, and Wagner had become part of it, as familiar as Shakespeare or Bret Hare.’” Dizikes, *Opera in America*, 312.

⁷³ Levine explains: “More and more, opera in America meant foreign-language opera performed in opera houses like the Academy of Music and the Metropolitan Opera House, which were deeply influenced if not controlled by wealthy patrons whose impresarios and conductors strove to keep the opera they presented free from the influence of other genres and other groups.” Lawrence Levine, *High Brow/Low Brow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 102.

⁷⁴ Powrie, *Carmen on Film*, 237.

were seen as a “destroyer of ancient opera traditions.”⁷⁵ As Wagner’s music began to ascend in the United States to be the most “high brow” form of opera, disapproval was directed against opera’s older forms. George Templeton Strong from *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* in 1884, for example, criticized Verdi’s *Macbeth* for its “screaming unisons everywhere,” as compared to Wagner’s dissonant harmonies.⁷⁶ Wagner’s music and audiences were perceived as “another audience of the highest cultivation and of another taste,” far more refined than Italian opera as to produce a “super-elite” of avant-garde opera.⁷⁷

In Farrar’s era, Boston critic H. T. Parker described Wagner’s music in the American opera house decades after its initial popularity as still a “stranger” to opera. He continued: “When we hear it at all, at concerts, shorn of all the stage conditions for which it was written—as though we were back in the elementary Wagnerian days of the [18]70s and the early [18]80s.”⁷⁸ More recently, John Dizikes summarizes Parker’s thoughts on Wagner as an American perception of the music as “difficult, strange, disturbing. In short: in America, Wagner was a ‘modernist.’”⁷⁹ Dizikes recognizes “The Wagnerian Aftermath” (a resurgence of Wagnerism) that came after the German composer’s death in 1883 as modernism collided with opera using verismo performance technique.

Contrary to Wagner’s extreme approach to voice and opera, a more naturalistic and realist style of acting became highly marketable within opera, and fit nicely with

⁷⁵ Levine, *High Brow/Low Brow*, 102.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 311.

⁷⁹ Dizikes, *Opera in America*, 311.

opéra comique and the performance technique of verismo. A new genre of opera developed through operatic works as early as 1874 when Georges Bizet composed *Carmen*.⁸⁰ *Carmen* called for singers within title roles as well as the chorus to move realistically, and “outside of the music” while singing at a separate tempo made from the composition.⁸¹ The opéra comique tradition included spoken dialogue, recitative, and lyrics conveyed through song.⁸² As well, it included a separate, realist choreography alongside the opera’s musical score. As opéra comique, *Carmen* could be performed to include operatic acting and movement. Previous generations in which prima donnas were bound to the song primarily might not have balanced their performance with free movement as easily.

The vocal technique and virtuosity required to perform opera in the mid nineteenth century differed greatly from that of the 1910s and 1930s. During this period, female opera singers, launched by Farrar, learned a completely new way to perform. Farrar led this reincarnation of opera singers into “singing actresses,” who became successful by forsaking the “purity” or the “beauty,” and, thus, sanctity of the bel canto operatic voice. The new genre of opera as inherently lyric and energetic produced a “new repertoire in which vocal virtuosity of the traditional sort was deprecated in favor of a more emotionally immediate kind of singing.”⁸³

Farrar’s landmark performance of *Carmen* on February 17, 1916 at the Met was

⁸⁰ Burton D. Fisher, *Bizet’s Carmen: Opera Classics Library Series* (Opera Journeys Publishing, 2005), 15.

⁸¹ McClary, *Carmen*, 24–26.

⁸² Lacombe, *Keys to French Opera*, 233.

⁸³ Henry Pleasants, *The Great Singers: From Jenny Lind and Caruso to Callas and Pavarotti* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), 302.

unlike that of any other prima donna. Farrar applied the verismo performance technique to her interpretation of the main role and embellished the staccato vocal lines and modern staging to fragment the bel canto voice. Reviews were mixed. Some wrote that Farrar's interpretation was immoral or distastefully animalistic.⁸⁴ These reviews claimed she pushed the realism of *Carmen* to the point of disrespectability for a woman on the stage. Other reviewers lauded this new interpretation as honoring the spirit of Carmen as wild and free in a modern way. The public's anxiety and desire over Farrar's Carmen resided in "prejudice against the ideal Gypsy woman whose crime was to be free."⁸⁵

Initial criticism came from the music journal *International Music and Drama*, which referred to Farrar's acting on that legendary night as "strange and pathetic vulgarities," continuing, "The slaps she administered the bewildered Don José; the kicks and cuffs and catch-as-catch-can bout with the chorus girls, one of whom was valiantly thrown over by Madame and had to be surrounded by her companions to conceal her tears to the public."⁸⁶

In the first act especially, Mme. Farrar seemed like an energumen seized and shaken either by the evil spirits or by several quarts of her ancestral beverage which rendered her entirely incapable to check and control herself. I am not mentioning her impossible make-up, her torn and tattered dress, her arm and right breast entirely naked, her boorish poses, her sudden sallies towards her fellow cigar-makers, and the rest with all its concomitants of altered or interrupted melodic lines.⁸⁷

After this performance, Farrar's fellow cast member Caruso complained that he

⁸⁴ E. V., "The Fourteenth Week at the Metropolitan, a Farrar Movie Thriller," *International Music and Drama*, February 26, 1916, 3–5.

⁸⁵ Bennahum, *Carmen*, xiv.

⁸⁶ E. V., "The Fourteenth Week," 3.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

didn't appreciate Farrar's "tiger-like tactics."⁸⁸ Headlines dramatically reported the infamous night in opera and the egregious treatment of the world-famous tenor. After finishing with the chorus girl, Farrar had turned to Caruso's Don José and, instead of throwing a rose at him, she "allowed her hand to continue with the gift and presented . . . a blow on the cheek that could be heard all over the house."⁸⁹ Rather than fighting back, Caruso stared at Farrar stunned, and simply rubbed his cheek.

Later, during his solo, Caruso was distracted by Farrar's "frantic" movements. As recourse, he grabbed her by the shoulders, and threw her down to the ground. The drama continued backstage—audience members and staff could hear Caruso and Farrar yelling when the curtains went down.⁹⁰ *The New York Times* wrote, "Geraldine Farrar A Lively Carmen: Introduced a Wrestling Bout in Bizet's Opera."⁹¹ *The Washington Post* continued with the headline: "Resents Farrar Slap: Caruso Balks at Too Much Realism in Carmen."⁹² *The Chicago Daily Tribune* posted, "Caruso Silent upon Slap: Anyhow He Got Vengeance: Opera Star Refuses to Comment on Story that Farrar Became Too Realistic in Scene."⁹³ The famous tenor objected to her spontaneous change to the encounter by saying "Hollywood tricks! . . . What does she think this is? A cinema?"⁹⁴

⁸⁸ Farrar, *Such Sweet Compulsion*, 170.

⁸⁹ Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 110.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Anonymous, "Geraldine Farrar A Lively Carmen: Introduced a Wrestling Bout in Bizet's Opera," *New York Times*, February 18, 1916, p. 9, col. 3.

⁹² Anonymous, "Resents Farrar Slap: Caruso Balks at Too Much Realism in Carmen," *The Washington Post*, February 18, 1916, 14.

⁹³ Irving Kolodin, *The Metropolitan Opera, 1883-1966: A Candid History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966).

⁹⁴ Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 110.

Other critics and audience members were thrilled by Farrar's interpretation of *Carmen*. These reviewers lauded Farrar's version of Carmen as one of the most modern opera roles with a contemporary style of acting and vocality. They attributed Farrar's modern characterization of Carmen as a reason to update and extend opera to a popular American audience. Farrar's interpretation of Carmen on film also contributed to this public support.

Alice Fahs writes about "girl reporters" and "stunt reporting" as a "subgenre of the new human interest journalism, focusing on the dramatic and 'thrilling' sight of women out of their accustomed sphere."⁹⁵ Girl reporter Nelly Bly had pioneered the subgenre with her "undercover work at Blackwell's Island Insane Asylum, her trip around the world, and other stunts, but by the mid-1890s numerous newspaper women were engaged in such work."⁹⁶ Like its appreciation of plucky girl reporters, the *New York Times* revered Farrar's new Carmen for its fresh take and physicality: "Miss Farrar has now brought her performance of the role to a point of more animation and power than last year." Furthermore, the publication explained that Farrar "has made progress in the direction of building it up to a more consistent whole along the lines in which she conceived the character."⁹⁷ Descriptions of Farrar's performance in *The Independent* recalled sensationalist depictions of the plucky girl reporter. Farrar was described as having leapt up as if crazed and pounced on an unsuspecting chorus girl, "plucking out

⁹⁵ Alice Fahs, *Out on Assignment: Newspaper Women and the Making of Modern Public Space* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 2011.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 163.

⁹⁷ Anonymous, "Farrar's Carmen Made Realistic," *New York Times*, February 19, 1916, 9.

handfuls of her hair when the rude soldiers intervened.”⁹⁸ The young woman’s long hair “fell in cascades and flowed and writhed about so that it gave murderous impressions.”⁹⁹

In his cinematic interpretation, director Cecil B. DeMille wanted the “Fight Scene” in *Carmen* to be as realistic as possible.¹⁰⁰ Largely because of the “Fight Scene,” *Carmen* was banned by thirty Pennsylvania censorship boards and couldn’t be screened in Philadelphia cinemas. It was the first time a film had depicted two women physically fighting.¹⁰¹ In DeMille’s film version, violence played a spectacular role. Farrar dragged Jeanie MacPherson, around the room by her hair, attacking MacPherson first by grabbing her and pulling her across the table. Farrar then fiercely gripped MacPherson’s face before she hit, pushed, and shook her. MacPherson’s clothes were completely ripped, her wig fell off, and she bled. To capture the realism, DeMille kept shooting. While some censors abhorred such behavior, other reviewers loved it.¹⁰² One reviewer wrote about the “old” interpretations of this role and Farrar’s fresh one: “As Miss Farrar interprets it, Carmen is a plump little body with a high temper, an ardent nature and potency in the ‘wallop’ that nobody would suspect from her size. There must hereafter be a recognized

⁹⁸ Anonymous, “Music or Movies?” *The Independent*, February 28, 1916, 294.

⁹⁹ Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 110.

¹⁰⁰ This opera performance directly followed her shooting of the Hollywood version of *Carmen* directed by Cecil B. DeMille. *Carmen* the film is an effective example of the public mediation of Farrar’s character as a modern diva. In 1915, *Carmen* became one of Cecil B. DeMille’s first projects in sensationalism and violent filmography. Anton Karl Kozlovic, “DeMille and Danger: Seven Heuristic Taxonomic Categories of His Hollywood (Mis)Adventures,” *European Journal of American Studies* 9, no. 1 (2014), accessed April 15, 2017, <http://ejas.revues.org/10165>. Notably, boxing was America’s main form of entertainment before the movies became popular, indicating the appeal of violence as a spectacle. T. Isenberg, *John Sullivan and His America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

¹⁰¹ Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 96.

¹⁰² Gillian Anderson, “Geraldine Farrar and Cecil B. DeMille: The Effect of Opera on Film and Film on Opera in 1915,” in *Carmen from Silent Film to MTV*, ed. Chris Perriam and Ann Davies (New York: Rodopi, 2005), 26.

line between the Carmens who have feathers and scratch and those that have whiskers and bite.”¹⁰³ The ultraprimitivist wild-cat “whiskers and bite” of Farrar’s realism and violent acts in her portrayal of Carmen contrasted Lind’s and Patti’s pastoral “feathers and scratch” of nightingales and birds of old Italian bel canto aesthetics.

In contrast to previous beliefs of women’s fragility, with *Carmen*, women could see themselves as socially mobile within the socioeconomic promise of developing metropolises. As a model of the New Woman, Farrar’s filmic Carmen used location shooting to adventure across vast terrain. She rode horses at great speeds, slept outdoors, flirted, danced, kissed men, wrangled, slapped, fought viciously with women and men, and laughed in the face of danger and death. In 1917, *Los Angeles Times* wrote about Farrar’s audacious new purchase: “Geraldine Farrar Buys a Speedster.” The article described Farrar buying the “speedster” in Los Angeles while filming; it was “a six-valve Stutz speedster . . . for runabout work and this was her idea of the most distinctive car of this type.”¹⁰⁴ Likewise, plucky girl reporters used new forms of technology and transportation to move across thresholds to new and exciting spaces for women. Girl reporter Kate Swan was described as “she drives a locomotive through the B&O tunnel at 75 miles per hour, becoming the first woman to run an electric engine.”¹⁰⁵ Also, Dorothy Dare was known as the “motor car girl” and was the “first woman to take a spin through the streets of New York in a horseless carriage,” and hence, “drives at the dizzying speed of 30 mph.”¹⁰⁶ An article in *New York World* dated February 14, 1897, featured Sallie

¹⁰³ Ibid., 26.

¹⁰⁴ Anonymous, “Geraldine Farrar Buys a Speedster,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1917, V15.

¹⁰⁵ Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 249.

Madden's article, "A Woman's Wild Ride Down a Mountain: Her Thrilling Experience Shooting a Perilous Pennsylvania Chute a Half Mile Long on a Frail Railroad Handcar."¹⁰⁷ Georgia Rose wrote the first article in an eight-part series for the *Los Angeles Times*: "Gets Ready For Airplane Era: Young Woman Takes Instruction Course and Will Tell Times Readers Real Facts About Flying as practical Means of Transportation."¹⁰⁸

Joan the Woman—Farrar's next film after *Carmen*—took explicitly to "epic film," placing Farrar in risky situations. In an early depiction of feminism, DeMille titled the film of Joan of Arc as *Joan the Woman* to bring romance and female desire into the story of Joan's visions and heroism of the siege of Orléans. As a protofeminist icon, Joan of Arc had transformed herself multiple times from a great writer of the later middle ages, to a defender of women against the censoring of their writing in the *querelle des femme*, to a religious recluse, and she finally reemerged as a military heroine. Thus, Farrar's risk as *Joan the Woman* was not just as a human body thrust into dangerous situations that came with epic film, but also as a female body filled with the desires, cravings, and sexualities of the modern woman. For dramatic effect, Farrar wore a heavy suit of armor, and agreed to cut her long hair into a bob for the role. Farrar was physically challenged and endangered while shooting the film, and was specifically described as a woman. One reporter wrote of Farrar's performance in *Joan the Woman*: "Tain't enough she can act;

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Georgia Rose, "Gets Ready For Airplane Era: Young Woman Takes Instruction Course and Will Tell Times Readers Real Facts About Flying as Practical Means of Transportation," *Los Angeles Times*, August 14, 1921, II-1.

she can ride a horse like a veteran, fight like a bull-dog, love like a queen and die like a martyr.”¹⁰⁹

When the diva worked tirelessly “behind the scenes,” the public enjoyed her transformation from glamorous icon to a lovable tomboy—thus, Farrar was known as “Our Jerry” for her tolerance and even thrill from the physical danger in which she put her body while on set. Farrar had to stand in a trench of deep water for three hours while they shot a particularly epic scene. “When DeMille . . . suggested that she come out and take a break, a *Photoplay* reporter raved, ‘Our Jerry replied, ‘If the boys can stand it, I think I can.’”¹¹⁰ In *Joan the Woman*, Cecil’s cousin, Agnes DeMille, recounted the hazards to which Farrar subjected her body. Agnes DeMille also recounted that, although there was a stunt double, Farrar did most of her own stunt scenes: “Farrar was given a suit of armor . . . She spent days in the saddle . . . up to her waist in muddy water . . . fending off broken spears, falling beams and masses of struggling extras.”¹¹¹

Agnes DeMille recounted the vulnerability of Farrar’s final scene, and the actress’s “great fortitude and professionalism.” DeMille went on: “Farrar stood until she was obliterated by smoke and flame, although everyone said it would do her voice no good at all. But when they burned the dummy and its hair caught and flaked off in a single shower of fiery cinders, she turned sick and had to go to her dressing room and lie down.”¹¹² Farrar recounted the scene:

I had ammonia-soaked cotton in my nostrils and glycerin cotton in my mouth and on my lips . . . [my hair] and my eyelids were treated with some kind of mild

¹⁰⁹ Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 103.

¹¹⁰ Simonson, “Screening the Diva,” 93.

¹¹¹ Simon Louvish, *Cecil B. DeMille: A Life in Art* (New York: St. Martin Press, 2007), 124.

¹¹² Louvish, *Cecil B. DeMille*, 124.

medicament to prevent singeing also my hands and arms. The fires were lighted . . . It was not a very comfortable job . . . the smoke was quite a hazard; on the sidelines ambulances and fire extinguishers were at hand for an emergency—happily not needed . . . *but I loved every moment of Joan.*¹¹³

Along with the physically resilient and adventurous New Woman of Farrar's public character in film and opera stage performances, she conveyed an image of the plucky girl of a more domestic nature. Farrar gave young ladies advice against a life of being sedentary and recommended daily physical activity. More importantly, she encouraged them to "hav[e] a purpose in life." Paul Fryer describes the broad scope of Farrar's authorship for women's magazines and other newspapers and journals about food, marriage, weight issues, childcare and child rearing, and even a woman's right to education and career.¹¹⁴ She published with *Bookman*, *The New York Times*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The Atlanta Constitution*, and *The Forum* among countless other journals and newspapers, which allowed her to connect to multiple female audience bases.

Even though Farrar was depicted as a New Woman who was highly visible, vocal, and successful in American public culture, she still had to negotiate her persona with the popularity of the sentimental woman. The diva had to constantly masquerade her success and other modern traits. She instead had to celebrate the domesticity she brought to the public sphere, or to celebrate her altruism to help other women to succeed as she had. She did this to remind them of the importance of home life. As an example of the diva's concealment, Farrar also wrote articles in *Good Housekeeping* that addressed girls' and women's need to change their socioeconomic situation. With her article "Geraldine

¹¹³ Fryer, *Opera Singer*, 169–70. (Italics mine).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

Farrar's Advice to Aspiring Singers,” Farrar gave sound advice to girls who wanted to sing grand opera. She gave details on the physical stamina, temperament, and resilience a prima donna must endure. However, Farrar quickly denounced the suffrage movement:

The great mistake of the suffragists, it seems to me, is that they are trying to give women identically the same activities and responsibilities as men—to direct their energies towards business and politics . . . [Women] have a very strong influence in literature, drama, music . . . If I were not an artist, I should want to be a wife, a mother, a leader in all characteristic feminine activities. For I believe that the more wholesome and the most important field for women is in these matters.¹¹⁵

Moreover, in a “*Boston Daily Advertiser* piece [she wrote] disparagingly as ‘this feminism, race suicide, etc., what is it but this, that all repressed women are getting discontented and muttering.’¹¹⁶ Furthermore, she argued that, although marriage was not for her, “I am an old fashioned enough to think that a woman should subordinate for her husband.”¹¹⁷ *Musical America* ran a similar story under the headline “Miss Farrar Pities the Woman Without a Purpose in Life.” In these articles, Farrar explained the value of marriage and mothering, and described the importance of women’s work as domestic work: “To me there is nothing more worthy of pity than a woman without a purpose in life . . . I believe that every girl inclined to consider herself as immune from work should be made to care for her own little belongings about the house . . . I think it wrong that mothers entrust the upbringing of their children to governesses.”¹¹⁸ Farrar had marketed herself as a wholesome but outspoken All-American New England girl; however, her

¹¹⁵ Geraldine Farrar, “Geraldine Farrar's Advice to Aspiring Singers,” *Good Housekeeping*, July, 1911, 53.

¹¹⁶ Sumiko Higashi, *Cecil B. DeMille and American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 136; Anonymous, “Geraldine Farrar,” *Boston Daily Advertiser*, August 30, 1915, in Geraldine Farrar’s scrapbook, RLC, LMPA.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 136.

¹¹⁸ Fryer, *Opera Singer*, 29.

legendary performance in *Carmen* enshrined her as a sensationalist performer. The sentimental and domestic side characterized one significant part of her public image, situating her in the American sentimental tradition. But reviews of *Carmen*—both positive and negative—brought her closer toward technological liminality. In revealing the physicality of her body and her resilience to dangerous situations, Farrar demonstrated how liminality had changed for divas, from the pastoral of the garden to the more exciting aspects that came with mastering artifice by building bodily strength and competence and mastering technology.

As discussed in the next section, Farrar's voice in performance shifted from the old Italian bel canto tradition of singing toward the modern, physical, and realist tradition of the actress-singer. The actress-singer, combined with technological liminality, included the liberal modern pedagogy of the modern bel canto, and Bizet's *Carmen*.

Lilli Lehmann: Liberal Modern Bel Canto Vocal Training, Bizet's *Carmen*, and the Actress Singer

Farrar's singing became embodied through her vocal instruction with Lilli Lehmann. Lehmann focused particularly on the "artistic singing" that she believed was fundamental to learning how to sing. Lehmann had an ambitious career in which she played roles ranging from the lighter, more dexterous soprano voice type of coloratura of Bellini and Offenbach to the heavier-voiced and more enduring dramatic roles, especially those of Wagner.¹¹⁹ Toward the end of her career, she performed mostly lieder, short German art songs that require advanced musical and dramatic skill. We can compare Lehmann's liberal, modern approach to Garcia's obsession with anatomy as a vocal

¹¹⁹ Willa Willenbacher, publisher's note in *How to Sing*, by Lilli Lehmann (New York: Macmillan, 1902).

science pedagogue, and Lamperti's fixation on creating a "perfect" sound in the "musica" tradition as an empirical vocal master. Lehmann imposed the liberal, modern tropes of choice and individualism as an artist and as a diva, attempting to put the knowledge of singing back into the student's control. With this approach, she sought to make the methods that had come before accessible to a singer through her mental grasp of physical sensation:

My purpose is to discuss simply, intelligibly . . . the sensations known to us in singing, and exactly ascertained in my experience, by the expressions "singing open," "covered," "dark," "nasal," "in the head," or "in the neck," "forward," or "back." *These expressions correspond to our sensations in singing; but they are unintelligible as long as the causes of those sensations are unknown, and everybody has a different idea of them.*¹²⁰

After Manuel Garcia II's retirement, his star pupil, Mathilde Marchiesi, became the foremost bel canto vocal teacher in Europe. Although she had a chance to study with Marchiesi, Farrar was unconvinced that her best option was with Marchiesi's officious approach.¹²¹ Throughout her career, Farrar was equally, if not more, concerned with her ability to portray her roles as "musical drama." She focused on correctly singing the opera scores only secondarily.¹²² Performing *Carmen*, Farrar departed from the prima donna's bel canto purity of voice for a modern, extemporaneous acting style. As Farrar explained, "In my humble way I am an actress who happens to be appearing in opera."¹²³ Farrar continued by asserting that tonal beauty should be sacrificed "whenever it seemed

¹²⁰ Ibid., 1; (Italics mine).

¹²¹ Pleasants, *Great Singers*, 273.

¹²² Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 10.

¹²³ Geraldine Farrar, "I Sacrifice Tonal Beauty to the Dramatic Fitness," *The Atlanta Constitution*, April 15, 1911, 5.

to interfere with dramatic fitness.”¹²⁴ Farrar was anxious about physically protecting her voice. She knew the lessons of old Italian bel canto singing would be taxing for her. She was also concerned that the lessons might somehow detract from her unique qualities of singing. For example, Farrar felt her voice was unique for its “emotional color,”¹²⁵ an assessment confirmed later by her teacher, Lilli Lehmann.

From 1903--1906, Geraldine Farrar took daily lessons with Lehmann. After 1906, following her return to New York to work at the Met, Farrar went back each summer until 1914 to continue to study with Lehmann, whom she described as a “rigorous taskmaster,” and explained of her lessons:

No meager lesson of twenty or thirty minutes . . . a lesson lasted according to the endurance of the pupil. Mine were from two to three hours a forenoon. Singing, discussion, inquiry on my part, illustration on hers . . . Her conception of bel canto would shame many a professed native Italian pedagogue, and she believed in beautiful singing at every and all times. Of course we had arguments, but I know she respected me for my ceaseless whys and constant demands for enlightenment and free thinking.¹²⁶

Lehmann used a conversational, more liberal approach with Farrar, such that long after her tutelage ended, Farrar continued to be influenced by Lehmann. Farrar was frequently quoted speaking about her practice as an exploration of her individual sense of singing based upon acting. Farrar’s philosophy of vocal technique as reliant upon multiple sensibilities of dramatic action corresponded with Lehmann’s core values as a liberal modern. As an example of Farrar’s commitment to acting, and not just vocal quality, during the time of her lessons, Lehmann tried to tell Farrar how to hold a pose

¹²⁴ Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 20.

¹²⁵ Geraldine Farrar, *Such Sweet Compulsion: The Autobiography of Geraldine Farrar* (Richmond, Virginia: William Byrd Press, 1938), 62.

¹²⁶ Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 25; Farrar and Whitehead, 128. Reprinted from the *Saturday Evening Post* 1928 The Curtis Publishing Company.

and sing a phrase in a way to suit a Delsarte style of gesture.¹²⁷ But her focus on acting and physical action—as compared to voice in opera—may have been the reason that Farrar did not develop her upper register as fully as prima donnas from earlier generations. Her vocal strength stayed in her middle range.

Dizikes describes Farrar’s voice in her youth as “thin at the top, [and . . .] beautiful in the middle and . . . suited for lyrical roles.”¹²⁸ In 1906, at the age of twenty-four, Farrar debuted in America at the Met in the role of Juliet in Gounod’s *Romeo and Juliette*. The *Tribune* described her voice as “exquisite quality in the middle register, and one that was vibrant with feeling almost always.”¹²⁹ Richard Aldrich from the *New York Times* wrote: “Her voice is a full and rich soprano, lyric in its nature and flexibility, yet rather darkly colored.”¹³⁰

Described as having “color” or “emotional color” or “nuance,” Farrar’s voice differed from that of the traditional prima donna quality of “chiaroscuro.”¹³¹ According to James Stark, chiaroscuro is “an ideal voice quality” of bel canto singing or the

¹²⁷ The Delsarte system commonly used by opera singers originated an intricate system devised to teach actors how to locate the parts of their bodies from which emotions arise, to try to awaken genuine expression for acting on the stage. When brought to the States, Delsarte degenerated into a rigid taxonomy of set poses and gestures. Female opera singers were trained in Delsarte alongside their vocal lessons to give them fixed sets of postures, poses, and gestures that would be choreographed ahead of time and were meant to evoke specific ideals during pivotal moments in the operas. When Geraldine Farrar began to enter the fold of professional opera through the patrons of famous retired opera singers as De Reskes and Melba, she was told to take Delsartian lessons. Farrar always argued with her teacher because “she never was told the motivation for these movements,” and consequently felt that “it seemed to be all artificial, all outside, and there was no sincerity in any of it . . . There were things in my that were not having any expression at all, and I couldn’t express them with the conventional gestures that that class of girls were being taught. I looked at them and they were graceful enough, but perfectly meaningless.” Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 16.

¹²⁸ Dizikes, *Opera in America*, 402.

¹²⁹ Pleasants, *Great Singers*, 317.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

“bright/dark” tone,¹³² and originated in the presentation in visual art of a mixture/balance of “light and dark;” in chiaroscuro, light is compared to shadows.¹³³ As such, chiaroscuro, Stark explains, was necessary for bel canto singing, as, “Every sung note was supposed to have a bright edge as well as a dark or round quality in a complex texture of vocal resonances.”¹³⁴

In her chapter “White Voices” from *How to Sing*, Lilli Lehmann described white voices as “singers, male and female, who use too much head tone . . . they are not able to make a deeper impression, because their power of expression is practically nothing.” According to Lehmann, the “white voice” is an unbalanced voice that has not developed or considered the “lower ranges of the voice (‘greatest strength’ and the ‘middle ranges’ greatest expression).” The lower and middle ranges were used to produce the “higher” range, and, “when combined, carries the greatest power.” In analyzing Lehmann’s discussion of “white voices,” we see how Farrar valued the “color” or “emotional color” of her “middle range” (as most expressive). Although she wasn’t the most powerful singer, her “middle range” enabled her to develop her innovative style as the “actress singer” and modern diva.¹³⁵

In “White Voices,” Lehmann made a point to balance the different tones in the voice to create something akin to “chiaroscuro.” She defined chiaroscuro through the three different ranges of the voice, their qualities and values, and the importance of

¹³² John Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 33.

¹³³ Linda Cateura, *Oil Painting Secrets from a Master* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 42.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 33.

¹³⁵ Lehmann, *How to Sing*, 61.

finding their balance. However, Lehmann's stance differed from Stark's. While more recently, Stark was steeped in old Italian bel canto pedagogy and technique, Lehmann went one step further. She included the qualifier for "the best mixture—all three together" to be "developed to the highest art by the skill of the individual . . . only by a good ear for it."¹³⁶ Lehmann neither focused exclusively on vocal science's technically "perfect" anatomy/physiology to produce chiaroscuro, nor trained an empirical lens on the already-extant quality of the tone as preceding description. She looked to the individual artist's abilities and choice to balance the three registers, a vocal pedagogy and technique imbued with a liberal, modern episteme. By evoking a more complex description of singing, Lehmann offered more possibilities for multiple aesthetics of operatic singing based on the prima donna's choice.

One example of how Lehmann's vocal pedagogy allowed Farrar to choose how she would sing and move came from Farrar's experiences with the comportment lessons derived from Francois Delsarte, a French musician who developed a preparatory system for acting. Originally, Delsarte helped actors analyze how their characters' thoughts and feelings were expressed on stage. However, instead of moving in the style of Delsarte, Farrar stepped into contemporary female roles with modern storylines. Through these roles, she eventually went on to develop her own style of movement and gesture for the stage. Pleasants explains how Farrar's style manifested in the performance of new operas: "The operas of the new repertoire, concentrating more upon the projection of a personality than upon the exploitation of vocal virtuosity, enabled certain singers to

¹³⁶ Ibid.

achieve greatness without being great singers by standards previously prevailing.”¹³⁷

Personality, Pleasants explains, was becoming more important in opera and came in the form of new gestural styles of “acting opera” as well as in opportunities to “speak” (not just sing) within the opera. For example, *Carmen* as operetta (with speech and singing) allowed for greater dramatic development with opera and focused less on virtuosic voices.

The singing actress was represented by a young group of female singers who no longer followed the posing associated with Delsarte, whereas divas of the Golden Age of bel canto depended upon it. “The operas of the new repertoire, concentrating more upon the projection of a personality than upon the exploitation of vocal virtuosity, enabled certain singers to achieve greatness without being great singers by standards previously prevailing.”¹³⁸ In contrast to Patti and Melba, singing actresses evoked a level of realist acting that allowed audiences to feel as if they were transported by real emotions into the situation of the characters. Of Farrar’s type of performance, the critic Homer Ulrich posits:

This generation has developed a new and most interesting type, the singer-actor, 50 per cent dramatic talent; perhaps even 80 per cent dramatic talent. That is what the audiences of today want. In the opera of other days one person came to the front of the stage and warbled, and then stood aside while another person warbled, and then two warbled together. Today people want something more than a voice.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Pleasants, *Great Singers*, 302.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 5; Homer Ulrich, *Famous Women Singers* (New York: Doss, Mead, and Company, 1953), 73.

Farrar admitted Lehmann's influence upon her art, because they engaged in conversations (and, oftentimes, debates) about how to sing. Through these interactions, Farrar grew into an opera singer, an artist, an independent thinker, and a *plucky girl* of action. Lehmann teasingly referred to Farrar as "an obstinate and willful little wretch"; however, Lehmann also "admitted her intelligence and allowed her to maintain her own individual approach toward dramatic interpretation."¹⁴⁰ Lehmann's complex relationship with Farrar may have helped her audience to respond positively. Dizikes describes Farrar's public image in parallel to her interpretation of *Tosca* or *Carmen* as "combative independence."¹⁴¹ In addition to Farrar's confrontation with the limitations of opera's conventions and stylistics, she connected to her audiences by standing up to authority figures. In turn, Farrar's emphasis was not squarely on voice. With Lehmann's help, she took creative control by developing her own style of movement and gesture previously unknown to opera choreography. In continuation of diva practices of self-care as Farrar's technological liminality, Farrar wrote about *Carmen* to continue the tradition of the diva's distinction and multiple personae.

Conclusion: "Carmen, c'est moi!": The Universal Appeal and Technological Liminality of Carmen

It was no secret that Geraldine Farrar was one of the most narcissistic divas of the twentieth century. It is likely, then, that as a narcissist, she believed she was performing *Carmen* as another version of herself.¹⁴² After reading the original early-nineteenth-

¹⁴⁰ Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 25.

¹⁴¹ Dizikes, *Opera in America*, 403.

¹⁴² "Small and slender, with delicate, finely proportioned features, she was simply an overwhelmingly pretty girl. She knew this—and she loved it. The strain of narcissism detectable in most singers was, in Geraldine Farrar, pronounced." "Her Parisian dresses were exquisite and original. She was slender as a birch, and a mania for freedom of the throat and shoulders kept me constantly alert for

century travel novel *Carmen* for the film, Farrar was quoted saying, “It seems to me I knew all these events—even before Mérimée—that I was Carmen herself.”¹⁴³ The same way that Farrar jumped on a table to dance the Sequidilla in the film *Carmen* by Cecil B. DeMille, she was known for dancing on the tops of pianos for friends and dinner guests wearing only a negligee, bumping and grinding in a flapperesque fashion.¹⁴⁴

At its height, the role of Carmen was highly-regarded by writers and artists such as French novelist and author—most famously of *Madame Bovary*—Gustave Flaubert, who didn’t merely project himself onto her male lovers, but also self-identified with the heroine.¹⁴⁵ Flaubert said Carmen’s character expressed the artistic and ethical conviction that he could only hope to act upon in his life. On first seeing *Carmen*, he proclaimed: “Carmen, c’est moi!”¹⁴⁶ In comparison to Flaubert’s first heroine, both Carmen and Madame Bovary attempt to live unencumbered by social convention. And with the theme of ultrapastoralism, both heroines choose lives of insatiable, almost animal-like passion and love; and both die in order to remain free. Perhaps not so boldly as Flaubert, indeed, Bizet himself confessed his excitement on *Carmen*’s opening night, exclaiming that he felt like a “pretty girl on her most important day,” implying a projection of himself onto his heroine.¹⁴⁷

In her writings, Farrar quoted from the original creator of *Carmen*, nineteenth-

misplacement of tulle and ribbon which she would toss carelessly side as if no flesh were thus exposed.” Pleasants, *Great Singers*, 313, 314.

¹⁴³ Powrie, *Carmen on Film*, 44; Farrar, “The Psychology of Carmen,” 414.

¹⁴⁴ Schroeder, *Cinema’s Illusions*, 16.

¹⁴⁵ McClary, *Carmen*, 128.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

century novelist Prosper Mérimée: “The psychology of Carmen is the psychology of Life.” To which she added, “If this be true, then every ‘expression’ of his variable heroine will be a new expression of Life. So why should the procession of Carmens ever end?”¹⁴⁸ Singer-actresses such as the original Carmen, Célestine Galli-Marié, Emma Calvé, and then Farrar perhaps found *Carmen* fulfilling to perform because of the dynamism of the leading role.¹⁴⁹ *Carmen* was noted as not only a universally-appreciated opera, but also as the most translatable character from opera to nonoperatic productions. The opera and role were perhaps responsible for inspiring some of Farrar’s real-life escapades as well as those of other women.

Traditional classical scholars claim the diva, in a sense, “died” when mass culture overshadowed the popularity of opera.¹⁵⁰ The diva’s symbolic capital was once part of an empowered, modern woman performer with the materiality of desire and pleasure in her voice. However, with film’s rising dominance in popular culture, the male gaze easily consumed the female object. The optic realm overtook the vocal, thereby depriving the opera diva of her power. This struggle between the *authentic* diva and the *mediatized* or *vulgar* diva did not manifest in Farrar’s experience of the film *Carmen*. This is especially true if we frame Farrar’s adaptability to film as part of her brazen use of artifice to transition the diva from the garden to the city. When *Carmen* was released, Farrar was asked about her impression of seeing herself on the screen. She replied that she “was

¹⁴⁸ Farrar, *Bookman*, 415.

¹⁴⁹ Other successors were Dorothy Dandridge in the 1954 film *Carmen Jones*, and Beyoncé in the 2000 MTV Hip-Opera, *Carmen*.

¹⁵⁰ In Chapter 5, I extensively discuss the hierarchy of diva and prima donna from classical literature to ones that include media studies and technology. Cowgill and Poriss are two of the scholars I mention who draw these comparisons. Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss, eds., *The Art of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), xxxv.

thrilled as if she had left her seat and actually was acting on the screen.”¹⁵¹ By projecting herself from sitting in the theatre to acting on the screen, Farrar innovated a new, diva-centric gaze for women audiences to imagine the diva leaping from the screen—heroically marauding through treacherous terrain and alongside otherwise dangerous villains—to their real lives.

Farrar’s interruption of the traditions and aesthetics of opera, and her prima donna challenge to pastoral feminine ideals from which she came, confronted the naturalization of the sublime or nostalgia that had become projected upon the industrial and technological landscape. This naturalization was also redirected onto the diva when written about with the pastoral lens. Through her focus on physical action, real emotion, and modern interpretations of opera’s female roles, Farrar used both Carmen and the plucky girl to trace the liminality of the New Woman moving away from the conventional stipulations for her modern gender.

The Victorian prima donnas of Lind’s and Patti’s eras relied more on the *purity* of voice than on acting and thus became marginal in the age of the modern diva, which turned its attention to mobility, urban spaces, the technology of the *New Woman*, and the *Gerryflapper*, all closely associated with Farrar. To leave the garden of the prima donna for the city of the modern diva, Farrar used her physicalism and body to expose the artifice and to embolden the New Woman. Farrar situated herself at the limen of pastoralism and technology to avoid becoming trapped within the conditions of pastoralism that defined her. She accomplished this transition by reinterpreting female roles of opera through vocality at once dramatic, physical, and extemporaneous, which

¹⁵¹ Anonymous, “Geraldine Farrar Seen but Not Heard,” *The New York Times*, November 1, 1915, 11.

had only previously been possible when the diva sacrificed her health or well-being in order to have a moment of empowerment or agency. As an ultraprimitivist hero, Farrar pushed the limits of previously-held styles of acting and movement, and modern female characterizations, while utilizing technologies prior generations had deemed inappropriate; however, these ultraprimitivist, heroic acts moved the diva from the garden of human design (masculine) to the city, where she could envision and act upon opportunities for women (by women's own design).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION: THE MIDDLE SPACE, THE DIVA IN THE GARDEN

These chapters have explored aspects of the diva that originated in the metaphor of the middle space; they included (a) the diva's body/embodiment and the diva's agency or—according to Bourdieu—the diva's *habitus*; (b) how the diva had used sexuate difference to negotiate the pastoral; and (c) the diva's presence within both live and mediatized states of performance. The middle space as a garden negotiated the relationship between the natural and the artificial, operating as a metaphor for the diva's effort to negotiate the space between America's pastoral longings and the advance of technologically driven modernity. By doing so, the divas discussed here attempted to forge a passage between pastoral and technological spaces to show how women, heretofore confined to the natural in premodern America, could move forward into the cultural, and, thus, into modernity.

In the first section of this chapter, I describe how the diva became a classed subject. While the diva became more agentive within modern society, she had to account for how her body—which otherwise might not be readable as modern—transformed from a female body to a working woman. Drawing upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu, I describe this process of the diva, whose practices, training, and work of vocality took place through her female body and entered the modern social world as the *embodied state* as well as *habitus*. In this section, the diva is described as taking her education, resources,

and gifts from her embodiment to become part of a classed demographic in modern society.

In the second section, the diva negotiated the pastoral with sexuate difference or sexuation. Although the diva's embodied practices described in the prior section would seem to signal her relationship with materiality, the pastoral narrative, focused as it is on transcendence, would seem to prove otherwise. In addition, the diva's multiple narratives positioned her voice as a "cry" or a "pure voice," and its association with desire, emotion, *jouissance* and the feminine made the effect of her art immaterial. As a pastoral paradox, immateriality worked alongside the diva's vocality as part of her cultural inheritance with the animal world as primal/immaterial. The diva's relationship to the psychoanalytic notion of *object-voice* was historicized within Lind's and Patti's narratives as an immaterial and transcendent effect of singing with the castrati. To account for the immateriality primal paradox, I discuss how a woman's self-care, or Irigaray's theory of self-affection,¹ conscious breath, and ethics of communication might intervene to account for the diva's artifice and cultural production. Discourses of self-care thus resist a narrative that insisted upon a woman artist's sacrifice and natural immediacy. Such

¹ Luce Irigaray describes practices of "self-affection" as that which we can use to explain sexuated vocalic space that "permits an individual becoming thanks to a process of going back and forth between the self and the outside with regard to the self—another subject, object or world" (Irigaray, "The Return," 230). Irigaray also refers to self-affection as a physical practice that can be used to describe performance as an awakening of sexuate difference through alternate acts of communication, not based on logos or speech, but on the gesture that is conscious breathing. Because women have historically been excluded from accurate representation, or cultures of writing and speech, Irigaray asserts women need to practice conscious breathing on their own first, internally, as an autonomous breath, and then they might have a chance to experience self-affection and autonomy. Irigaray, *Between East and West: From Singularity to Community*, trans. Stephen Pluháček (Delhi: New Age Books, 2002), 80-81. After which, women who practice autonomous breath to have self-affection might hold open a shared space of respect for others to do the same with a "shared breath." Irigaray, *Between East and West*, 84-87. I have described operatic vocality, then as divas' singing practices, who each engaged in practices of Irigaray's "self-affection" or my usage of the term, "self-care" in order to become autonomous first with their vocal education, lessons, and afterwards, self-practice in order to later share a space of sexuate difference with others. Luce Irigaray, "The Return," 230.

discourses do so by focusing on how the diva's body, as a female body became a woman performer by using embodied practices, and, thus materializing breath, voice, and artifice. The diva practiced self-care in order to navigate carefully how she cultivated and negotiated her natural body, as instinctive, animalistic, and sometimes violent, to eventually transition to the space of the cultural body, as modern, emboldened—as the successful working woman, thriving in urban spaces.

To close, I consider the crucial contradiction between *live* and *mediatized* performance, and the constraints and opportunities this dynamic presented to the diva. I interrogate assumptions and received opinions about the relationship between live and cinematized performance by reversing the diva's traditional move from stage to screen. It was not until after her time with Cecil B. DeMille in the film *Carmen* that Farrar hit her stride as an opera singer and actress. In film, Farrar discovered the advantages of unlimited time and space with endless rehearsals for a scene and location shooting that allowed for a more invigorated performance. She took some of what she learned from working on screen with her upon returning to her performances at the Met. In this part of the discussion, the notion of the *copy* associated with mediatized performance brings together discourses from Walter Benjamin and Phillip Auslander to elucidate the productivity of Farrar's Met performance.

With all three sections, the core of my account suggests that the diva was able to mediate class, reconcile the pastoral (and live and mediatized performances) with the dialectic of nature/culture, and manage a transition from pastoral to technological middle spaces. I situate the diva within these fields to explicate misconceptions within pastoral

and philosophical discourses about women's association with "the natural," an attribute that forestalled her participation into modern subjecthood.

The diva actualized this transformation by inhabiting multiple subject positions, and suturing them to create a kind of middle space between her affiliations with pastoral and technological middle spaces. Her personae were largely a result of her numerous roles as performer, popular icon, and pastoral figure. As a performer, the diva was expected to meet audience expectations and longings for the nostalgia and beauty of the voice. And yet Farrar broke the prima donna's glass ceiling disrupting and subverting these expectations, and instead creating fresh interpretations of female roles in opera. As a popular icon, thus, the diva navigated sentimentalism and the American obsession with technology. In turn, the diva was expected to remain appropriately feminine and domestic while being receptive to technological change.

As a pastoral figure, the diva claimed the space of the garden, a human-built "design" or manufactured "nature" within the ever-changing industrial and technological modern environments of cities.² The diva in the garden as the machine, who used her work, skill, and mastery of voice as a form of technology, thus served as a "poetic metaphor" for the nostalgic memory of nature, combined with the artifice of her technique. This duality, I argue, began with Lind, who performed a relatively unknown genre of operatic singing in 1850 America, *bel canto*.³

According to Elizabeth Grosz, the word *middle* in *middle space* means to "generate an anomaly that produces a new future, an anomalous working of the system,

² Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 24.

³ Marx, *Machine in the Garden*, 43.

the breakdown from inside the system that allows that system itself to generate a future that isn't containable by that system."⁴ The middle thus can help us imagine three pastoral spaces in which to figure the diva: the wilderness, the garden, and the city. These spaces warrant consideration in terms of how they exist in discourses about the middle as the terms Grosz invokes: *mimesis*, *performativity*, *utopia*, *becoming*, *difference*, and *iteration*. The middle space also includes the *vocalic space* that a singer manifests from her *interiority* of vocal production, reaching the *exteriority* with sound and reception. The question to consider, then, is how did the diva enable discourses of middle and the vocalic space from within her pastoral frame of wilderness, the garden, and the city? This next section applies *mimesis* to explicate the diva's struggle over the repetition that came with the opposition between being trained and seeking to be an original and accomplished artist. Mimicry and amplified mimicry also finesse the diva's art as repetition to overwhelm systems of gestures and vocality that came before.

Mimesis

*You must know that I am beginning to be an ape—a fact of which I was not aware until yesterday. I was singing to Mdlle. Du Puget, and she seemed a little bit surprised when, just once or twice, I displayed all my powers . . . and she looked at me as if she had not given me credit for this . . . First, I sang “in Persanai’s style,” and then “in Grisi’s”; and she was kind enough to say it was excellently imitated . . . The compliment was rather hard to digest . . . I cannot bear people to tell me I “imitate.” . . . It seems to me, that to take what is another’s, and use it for one’s self, and then make believe it is one’s own, is positively to steal.*⁵

⁴ Pheng Cheah, and Elizabeth A. Grosz, “The Future of Sexual Difference: An Interview with Judith Butler and Drucilla Cornell,” *diacritics* 28, no. 1 (1998): 40.

⁵ Henry Scott Holland, William Smyth Rockstro, and Otto Goldschmidt, *Memoir of Madame Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt: Her Early Art, Life, and Dramatic Career, 1820-1851 from Original Documents, Letters, and Diaries*, vol. 2, collected by Mr. Otto Goldschmidt (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1891), 74. (Italics mine).

Mimesis is not merely performance through repetition. Merely taking into consideration a person's (or an animal, as a chimpanzee's) ability to mimic another person reduces mimesis to instinct, thereby relinquishing the place of art in this act. Seeing mimesis as instinct absents choice (a foremost quality of art) and privileges repetition—in this case, copying another or training one's body to gesture, sing, or move *as another had prior*. Michael Taussig offers a definition more apt for the trajectory of the diva within the pastoral spectrum: "The wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and that power."⁶ In this section, I look again at the example of Jenny Lind, and how the diva transitioned between the pastoral and technological middle spaces through mimesis, mimicry, and amplified mimicry to transcend the gesture of repetition itself.

Of the divas discussed in this dissertation, Jenny Lind invited the richest discussion of mimesis because of the extent to which she resisted it with her singing. And yet it is still worth noting that the tension of mimesis was normalized during her time. In 1891, W. S. Rockstro wrote about Lind as a "born artist," adding: "Under Garcia's guidance, [she] had now become a *virtuosa*." Rockstro considered Lind's voice the perfect symbol of the Golden Era of bel canto opera singers because Lind used her close relationship with Nature and virtue to override the criticism of her artifice. She was "born an artist," but required training from Garcia to sustain her voice.⁷ According to Emily Dickinson, as described in Chapter 2, Lind's training and appropriation of the

⁶ Michael T. Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge Press, 1993), xiii.

⁷ Rockstro, *Jenny Lind*, 7.

techniques of others made her a less-than-authentic singer. (She became someone other than herself through her technique.) However, for Rockstro, Lind's effort to preserve her voice as a way to maintain a connection to an era gone by recalled Thomas Jefferson's grim predictions of an industrial boom and idealization of cultures of the past. Marx characterizes this anxiety by explaining "that America was not headed in the direction [Jefferson] preferred . . . [he] began to shift his vision of a pastoral utopia from the future to the past."⁸

Rockstro contended Lind's vocal accomplishments in the early nineteenth century countered claims from "modern critics" that "marvelous vocalists of the eighteenth century whose feats of skill have been described by admiring contemporaries in such terms of rapture" was "a gross exaggeration."⁹ More recently, J.B. Steane writes biting criticism about Adelina Patti's poor technique, her lack of execution of musical line, all while criticizing her style of singing as dated. Steane writes about her late recordings in 1905 and 1906 when the diva was the age of sixty-two and sixty-three.¹⁰ Steane's jabs, therefore were not just at Patti or what we now consider to be the flaws of early recording

⁸ Marx, *Machine in the Garden*, 140–41.

⁹ Rockstro, *Jenny Lind*, 8.

¹⁰ In 1905 and 1906 at the age of sixty-two and sixty-three, Adelina Patti recorded a series of operatic arias and popular songs. When we listen to the recordings, we might be distracted by the hissing and distant quality of some of these songs. As well, some critics said she was past her prime and the recordings didn't capture her voice. Musicians and scholars have reviewed these pieces critically; for example J.B. Steane notes Patti's "snatched breaths, scrambled or missing notes, broken phrases, simplified fioriture, light aspirates, scooping, and overly loud assaults on some notes" (Cone 247; Steane 15). Differentiating between the "nature" as compared to the "artifice" or technology and/or the age of Patti's instrument, Steane makes a final biting remark, "certain features of Patti's style at this date simply . . . [are] not musical" (Cone 247; Steane 15). Another review, however, from a critic of Patti's time, Michael Scott, from his 1914 book *The Record of Singing*, gives a far more generous appraisal of the recording as an archive for "the ancient graces of singing . . . the real portamento style, the elegant turns and mordents, and trill free of any suggestion of mechanical contrivance" (Cone 248; Scott 22-23). John Frederick Cone, *Adelina Patti: Queen of Hearts* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1993), 247; Anthony Rainer and J.B. Steane, *The Grand Tradition Seventy Years of Singing on Record* (London: Duckworth, 1974), 15; Michael Scott, *The Record of Singing to 1914*, volume I (London: Duckworth, 1979), 22-23.

technology. Rather, both Steane and the critics Rockstro contested use the evidence of either witnessing Lind's concerts or listening to Patti's late recordings in an attempt to disprove, or at the least, discredit the grandeur, superior artistry, and flawless technique that was the lore of the Golden Age of opera singers from the nineteenth century.

Rockstro also pushed up against the more extreme claim from critics that "the art of vocalization" that allowed Lind to represent the "Golden Age, is lost beyond all possibility of recovery"—when figured alongside J.B. Steane's harsh criticism of an aged diva; these claims imply that if current singers are not capable of reproduction, or with the flawed archive of Patti's recordings as evidence, the Golden Age perhaps never existed as a time of artistic flourishing, as we thought it had.¹¹ With his protest of Lind criticism, Rockstro thought it more productive to turn back to an earlier time when her style of singing emulated this Golden Age.

Rockstro continued with a description of Lind's singing in the most nostalgic sense: "The assumption that the art has been lost is absurd. The method may have been neglected, and temporarily forgotten. We do not deny that. But there is not – or ought not to be – the possibility of such a thing as 'lost art.' *What has been done once can be done again.*"¹² But could it? Could Lind merely have *repeated* the technique from the Golden Age of bel canto and thereby revive this moment of aesthetic idealism so deeply challenged by early modernity and technology? Moreover, could this act of mimesis prove the Golden Age *did* exist before and perhaps *could* exist again, simply because she was able to repeat the art form?

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid. (Italics mine).

Positing that mimesis has a relationship to modernity and primitivism,¹³ Taussig compares mimesis to “a foundational moment in the equation of savagery with mimesis,” in which “young Charles Darwin, in 1832 on the beach at Tierra del Fuego, [was] full of wonder at the mimetic prowess of primitives, especially as it concerns their mimicking him.”¹⁴ In light of mimesis and primitivism, when Lind resisted accusations that she was repeating another diva’s singing, she likened her own strength as a singer to that of an “ape.” In her words, “[I] displayed all my powers” and became upset when the hostess “looked at me as if she had not given me credit for this.”¹⁵ With the tradition of the diva as someone who navigated the pastoral and technological landscapes—and who must rely on talent as well as on formal training—mimesis takes on complexity, not merely repetition as Rockstro naively posits, or as of which Lind was concerned. Rather, mimesis is not repetition of the same; as Michael Taussig asserts, it is the transformation into something different.

Applying naïve notions of mimesis could lead to the conclusion that a singer only had to repeat what someone else had done before in order to successfully perform for an audience. As described in Chapter 2, Jenny Lind employed the echo as a version of mimesis of sound to repeat idealizations of femininity that existed in nature and were drawn from her Swedish pastoral homeland. According to this perception, audiences received Lind’s use of aural associations from the Swedish pastoral terrain—such as sounds as rivers and brooks, and other animals as cows and even the shepherd’s call—as evidence of her echo effect.

¹³ Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*, ix.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, xiv.

¹⁵ Holland, Rockstro, and Goldschmidt, *Memoir of Madame*, 74.

As part of the naturalness/artifice paradox, the diva performed the conjuncture of echo-ventriloquism, without which the echo merely mimicked pastoral ideals. The echo's pastoral ideals already existed as a universal given, whereas ventriloquism made overt the diva's artifice of hard work, skills, and mastering of vocal technique. Lind became the diva in the garden when she transitioned from echo (configured as an echo to the nature of her native land) to ventriloquism (the mechanistic qualities of a machine).

Lind's story, as told in Chapter 2, describes her transition from pastoral landscapes to the technology of ventriloquism, indicated by her choice to use the vocality and repertoire of "The Bird Song." When Lind performed "The Bird Song," she "thr[ew] her voice," creating bird sounds that projected the multiple personae of Lind and the Swedish Nightingale, a part-woman, part-bird hybrid. Lind's virtuosic simulation of bird sounds revealed itself as artifice because it showed her formal training, and thus, defied American Romantic aesthetics of innate talent. However, that Lind's use of bird sounds also inspired her nickname as Swedish Nightingale demonstrated how the diva could use operatic vocality to participate in culture (not solely nature with which women are routinely affiliated).

Questions about mimesis were also raised when the diva exaggerated the mimetic gesture in order to overcome it. All divas participated in mimicry, to a certain degree with their use of operatic vocality and emulation of multiple personae. Notwithstanding, Farrar's performances and use of vocality were best suited to this discussion. Elizabeth Grosz explicates the operation of this dynamic in Luce Irigaray's writings, which seeks to "'jam . . . the theoretical machinery' of philosophical systems, and to interrogate the

‘truth systems’ or assumptions that uphold certain discourses as authoritative.”¹⁶ In the voice of the hysteric, Grosz explains, Irigaray—from her early work, *Speculum of the Other Woman*¹⁷—emulates mimicry as “feminine in the extreme: it is based on masquerade, semblance, mimesis, artifice and seduction.”¹⁸ Grosz claims that Irigaray’s work should be understood as a performance of “amplified mimicry” or of the hysteric—Freud’s only example of women’s subject-formation that stands defiantly outside of his formation of subjectivity. I would say the same of Farrar whose presentation, as discussed in Chapter 4, of invigorated, violent performances all returned to this *problem of the body*¹⁹ in which sexuation complicates a feminist project by actually dealing with the specifics of the woman’s body.

Farrar portrayed the liminal figure of Carmen, which I frame within pastoralism as visceral, primal, and sexual to complete the mimetic circle started by Lind, who had denied herself any affiliation with the wilder side of nature. Instead, Farrar performed Carmen as a “woman,” but also through the trope of “becoming animal,” as Grosz discusses, a trope that figures in the theory of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Baruch Spinoza, Friedrich Nietzsche, Henri Bergson, and—in a sense in the gentler form of animals—Luce Irigaray. Grosz speculates that the animal’s inclusion in a corpus of the

¹⁶ Elizabeth A. Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (St Leonards, New South Wales, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1989), 139; Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), 78.

¹⁷ Irigaray, *Speculum*.

¹⁸ Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, 137.

¹⁹ What I mean by the “problem of the body” is the hesitancy of some feminist scholars that I wrote about in Chapter 1 to write about sexuation as embodied and as material. Thus, there is a tendency for these scholars to use “sexual difference,” not sexuation or sexuate difference, to instead write about the “empty sign” of desire from psychoanalytic terms, or Lacan’s “blind spot” of the categories of feminine/“Woman,” or as that which can be used as a strategy for women’s writing as *l’écriture féminine*. With practices of self-affection, however, it is possible to speak about sexuation and sexuate difference, as not just concepts, but as embodied, material practices.

humanities is “to haunt the conceptual aura” and serve as “a necessary reminder of the limits of the human, its historical and ontological contingency; of the precariousness of the human as a state of being, a condition of sovereignty, or an idea of self-regulation.”²⁰ Farrar celebrated the physicality, resilience, and mobility of the New Woman even as she demonstrated “becoming animal,” thereby performing the relationship between mimesis, modernity, and primitivism. With her operatic voice, the diva signaled—then exceeded—the limitations of the human, exhibiting remarkable achievement and pushing the boundaries of the human body.

Vocalic Space

Steven Connor explains that his (one’s) voice does not simply require space, it “requisitions space [with] the distance that allows my voice to come from and return to myself.”²¹ Voice claims space in two ways, according to Connor: “It inhabits and occupies space; and it also actively procures space for itself. The voice takes up place in space, because the voice *is* space.”²² The diva, as a singer for her roles as performer, a popular icon, and a pastoral figure, chose how she would occupy vocalic space. Indeed, how a diva negotiated her different personae in order to stay popular with the public depended on how she navigated both private and public space. The diva’s navigation of private and public space was also determined by the way in which she comprehended an interiorized and exteriorized space of her vocal production.

²⁰ Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011), 3.

²¹ Steven Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5.

²² *Ibid.*, 12.

Addressing two dialectics of vocality, the private and public, and the interiorized and exteriorized, complicates a previously-held belief that women were only capable of existing within private and interiorized spaces as domestic and passive beings—not as those accessing exterior space as modern, active, and working women. However, by navigating a discourse about both sides of the dialectic, we avoid privileging one for the other. Also, by doing so, we enter a discourse from psychoanalysis presented by Irigaray and Grosz about the interiority and exteriority of female corporeality and the irreducibility of body and mind as inseparable, visceral, psychical processes. With both personae of the pastoral and the technological, the diva challenged the dualistic functions of both to show her vocalic capacity for naturalness and artifice. By opening a space for them to co-exist with vocalic space, she enabled her mobility within the nature/culture dialectic.

Steven Connor defines “vocalic space” as “implicated space,” in which “the insides and outsides of things are not so powerfully distinguished as they are in later conceptions; insides and outsides change places, and produce each other reciprocally.”²³ Chapter 3 explored how Patti’s castle, set in pastoral surroundings, proffered a different idea of the function of sound in inside and outside space. When late Victorians went from the “public sphere to the private,” they had to “examine the ways in which sound interpenetrated . . . in the drawing rooms and parlors of middle class homes.”²⁴ Picker writes about late-Victorian British writers’ descriptions of living in London as “sounds as discerned outside professional dwellings—in the street and public spaces” and the “sound

²³ Ibid., 13.

²⁴ John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2003), 12.

inside” their home offices when working.²⁵ Patti’s voice carried the symbolism of her extravagant *private* home, and new opulent *public* opera houses where audiences went to hear her sing. While touring in the United States, and in the spirit of sound carrying between both private and public venues, Patti was expected to sing “Home Sweet Home” at every performance for concerts and operas.

Roland Barthes writes about the voice in terms of its “vocality” as the “viscera” that reaches beyond the surface of sound into the depths of the body of the performer and listener. In Chapter 4, I looked at how Farrar wrote about her vocal habits as an experience that could only be achieved from the physical, creative, and active experience of the modern diva. Barthes explains that because of its reliance upon the body, music “goes much further than the ear; it goes into the body, into the muscles by the beats of the rhythm, and somehow into the *viscera* by the voluptuous pleasure of its melos.”²⁶ In his writing about the German composer Robert Schumann, Barthes uses the viscera and the melos (melody) to describe the musical body. For operatic singing, the viscera comprises the lungs, the breath, and the voice, coming “from deep down in the cavities, the muscles, the membranes, the cartilages, and from deep down . . . as though a single skin lined the inner flesh of the performer and the music he sings.”²⁷ In Chapter 4, I described how Farrar wrote about herself as a wild animal that had to reach down into its own viscera daily with singing and performing other highly physical, athletic activities. Thus, considering vocalic space becomes a way of understanding the diva’s female body. And

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1993), 232.

²⁷ Roland Barthes, “The Grain of the Voice,” in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Steven Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 157.

Farrar took these explorations seriously, for one, by reminding herself of her own animality through metaphors of her invigorated performance that resembled the style of beasts.

For her part, Susanne Cusick explains that the interrelationships between voices and “viscera” “originate inside the body’s borders [and] (the body’s cavities) are determined by their site of origin, by the body itself.”²⁸ To think about voice is to think about the body, and to think about the body is, by necessity, to invoke sexuation and sexuate difference.²⁹ Notably, my use of the *différance* (as in the sexuate difference of the diva) relies upon Grosz’s understanding originally from Irigaray’s use of the term, which is not the same as distinction or dichotomy.

Many Anglo-American feminist perspectives of this term (especially when coupled with sexuation) hinge on the division of terms, as “dichotomy defines a pair of terms by a relation of presence and absence, or affirmation and denial, difference implies that each of the two (or more) terms has an existence autonomous from the other.”³⁰ Ferdinand de Saussure’s notion of linguistics relies on difference in that “no sign has any positive characteristics in and of itself,” and Irigaray’s notion differs by the way she figures aspects of linguistic difference for sexuate difference.³¹ Irigaray’s sexuate difference is the middle space best described by the philosopher as a “shared breath” between women and men that allows for silence, listening, and ethics of

²⁸ Suzanne G. Cusick, “On Musical Performances of Gender and Sex,” in *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity, and Music* (Como, Italy: New Press, 1999), 29.

²⁹ I discuss sexuation and sexuate difference in detail at the end of Chapter 1.

³⁰ Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, xvii.

³¹ Ibid.

communication.³² Because sexuate difference is irreducible, it cannot prove a subject's existence or non-existence through dichotomies, as Grosz explained, for example of, absence/presence, disembodiment/embodiment, or immateriality/materiality. Then, as pastoral mediators, akin to Irigaray's description of conscious breath as "shared breath," divas engaged in the process of operatic voice between a singer, other singers, and singers-audiences within the pastoral/technological spaces. In effect, the diva took up the space of sexuation and sexuate difference through her navigation of the three paradoxes I established in Chapter 1: naturalness/artifice, horrible/fantastic, and discipline/individualism—all framed by the dialectic of nature/culture. Each paradox contains the assumption that the diva's female body confined her to the realm of nature, the corporeal, the maternal, and forged a Cartesian dualism with the reason-bound mind. Along with descriptions of vocal performances from the stages of student of voice, to singer, to diva, the case studies of Chapters 2, 3, and 4 align this work's focus on embodiment with performance studies scholarship. Dwight Conquergood explains that nonembodied scholarship might favor the mind/body hierarchy of knowledge, where "mental abstractions and rational thought are taken as both epistemologically and morally superior to sensual experience, bodily sensations, and the passions."³³ The *middle* of sexuate difference thus can help us imagine the *in between space* of fixed categories produced by the classic Cartesian subject as subject/object, man/woman, mind/body, culture/nature, and human/animal.

³² Luce Irigaray, *Between East and West*, 84.

³³ Dwight Conquergood, "Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics," *Communication Monographs* 58 (1991): 180.

Cultivated breath might be another way to consider a diva's vocality as integrating body with mind. Irigaray explains breath as the only drive that psychoanalysis does not mention. Irigaray argues that breath acts first within drive and survival but, when cultivated, can move into a place of divine carnality, spiritual sharing, and autonomy. Opera divas who followed practices of self-affection—to which I refer in the dissertation as self-care—resonated with Irigaray's description of the body as integral to human development through “the education of the body, of the senses” reliant upon breath.³⁴ Through the lens of Irigaray's method and model of breath, looking at the integration of vocal techniques learned by bel canto masters, we may see that subject formation occurs more productively for performance through the cultivation of drives (from the autonomic function of “breathing” to the mastery of this function for art as “breath”). Irigaray describes breath as that which straddles between the body and language, drives and ethics, nature and culture, women and men. It is also possible to materialize a sexuate breath as vocalic space that overlaps desire and divinity.

In each of these spaces, the diva assumed modern subject positions as a performer, a popular icon, and a pastoral figure. To theorize the diva's emergence in this space with technologies of self-care, I turn to Bourdieu's conception of a *habitus*. Specifically, I argue that, by inhabiting a voice, the diva was also inhabiting and constructing a space. For singers, entrance into the modern, social world began with preparing the interior for the exterior performance of voice.

³⁴ Luce Irigaray, *Between East and West*, 7.

The Middle Space and Class

She isn't merely sensual. She couldn't be. The merely sensual woman is too transparent to be dangerous and, lacking mentality, she lacks power. Carmen couldn't have played havoc as she did except for the fact that there was a keen and subtle intelligence behind it all. She was deadly only because she could compel the highest as well as the lowest form of admiration. Then, too, remember that in playing the role the sympathy of the audience is all with the other woman. How is one to gain a justifiable sympathy for Carmen unless she is capable of making more than a merely sensual appeal?³⁵

For this section, I implement the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, Marcel Mauss, and Michel Foucault to address the field of class. Class affords the diva the middle space as a measure of control for the female body at work. It also helps the diva transition through the three pastoral spaces of wilderness, the garden, and the city. This section examines how middle space and class dissect the image of power from the diva. Bourdieu provides the vocabulary for describing how the diva experienced her social reality from the ground up—from her status as nonsinger (and as a female body), to singer (working woman), to diva (goddess, deification). As such, the diva learned to sing by moving through the different epistemes of vocal science, empiricism, and liberal modernity, only to revoke the dominance of these fields and assert her own symbolic capital (dominance) in agentive forms in public culture.

In the above-quoted passage, Farrar made at least two very important claims that help introduce a discussion of embodiment, agency, and class. Embedded in the interviewer's question, "What sort of woman is Carmen?" is an interrogation of the degree to which Farrar embodied the femme fatale; indeed, she was implicitly asking

³⁵ Gillian B. Anderson, "Geraldine Farrar and Cecil B. DeMille: The Effect of Opera on Film and Film on Opera in 1915," in *Carmen: From Silent Film to MTV*, ed. Chris Perriam and Ann Davies (New York: Rodopi, 2005), 25–26; Geraldine Farrar, *The Music Lover*, May 1915 [Undistributed interview with Geraldine Farrar]: 12.

“What sort of woman are you?” (And we have seen already that Farrar identified with the role to an inordinate degree.) Asking about Farrar as a “woman” (and not just a performer) was a way of speculating about her personal alliance with feminine ideals. Instead, the interviewer could have asked Farrar about being a professional singer and actress who did the work of interpreting a role. By not directing the conversation in such a way, the interviewer denied Farrar’s unique relationship to artifice, and denied the potential for the role of Carmen as the New Woman to have agentic endurance for women audiences in urban spaces. With her interpretation of Carmen, Farrar produced the fantasy of the modern woman who offers sex and love (but perhaps doesn’t deliver). Farrar took Carmen to the extremes of the diva’s boundaries of physicality and violence. As a pastoral figure from the middle space of her own resilience and mobility, at the intersection of the wilderness, the garden, and the city, she brought out the sensuality of the role, as well as associations of the uncouth diva performing through animalistic expression.

In the above-quoted passage, Farrar made the bold claim that her interpretation of Carmen attempted to transition the female body, otherwise considered “purely sensual,” to an empowered role by implementing her intelligence. Bourdieu writes about bodily aptitude beyond the realm of unperformed “intelligence,” a notion that might be applied to how Farrar took it upon herself to reject operatic traditions and aesthetics so she could discover a new form of movement and singing. As performed intelligence requires embodiment, the bodily aptitude of the diva tapped into semiotic processes and classed positions revealed by a highly attuned embodied state: “There is a way of understanding which is altogether particular, and often forgotten in theories of intelligence; that which

consists of understanding with one's body."³⁶ With singing, then, the diva distinguished how she came to know her body through vocal instruction. More accurately, the diva arrived at this realization by disciplining her body to enter an *embodied state*, a transition that occurred early on when she just began her education to sing operatically. Furthermore, the performer articulated for herself her processes of vocality and expressed her personae as the diva in how she cultivated her vocal body for the vocalic space.

Similar to Bourdieu, Michel Foucault writes about the body as discursively-constructed through different genealogical practices. These genealogical practices work in "disciplining" the body to make it into "a body of ideas."³⁷ The diva had been "disciplined" only to support the other side of the third paradox: discipline/individualism. A docile body participated; it just did so in a disciplined manner. The diva used discipline as one stage of her embodiment to reach agentic ends. As a classed subject who actively formed through voice, the diva thus could be described through middle space as vocalic space or the technologies of the self that made her create conditions for the exercise of agency.

The diva, through her very aesthetic, embodied power not just inherited by technique or promotion. Rather, her commanding presence on stage was constructed out of the embodied processes of learning how to sing. The embodied processes of the diva enabled middle space to join the shared or middle power relations. Embodied processes also had to do with turning the diva's female body into an instrument of work, to address the first paradox of naturalness/artifice. The shared or middle power relations required for

³⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words Essays Towards Reflexive Sociology* (Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press, 1990), 166.

³⁷ Gay Morris, "Bourdieu, the Body, and Graham's Post-War Dance," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 19, no. 2 (2001): 52.

the diva to enter the naturalness/artifice paradox also involved the fields of power within the vocal pedagogy and vocal lessons from vocal master to vocal student. The diva had to withstand both of these structures of power—of naturalness/artifice and discipline/individualism—in order to learn her craft.

The diva gained aesthetic purchase to redefine the self through the education and processes of the body for vocal performance. Understanding Bourdieu's and Foucault's theories about technologies and habitus allows us to answer three questions: How did the diva start to become a classed performer and a modern performer? How did she accomplish the roles of middle space or a vocalic space as a co-constitution that helped her transition as a socially mobile subject? And, how do we quantify the diva's body in an objectified way to make it part of a viable economy or market?

For the first question, I start with the diva's process of becoming a classed and modern performer, and then transition to Bourdieu's theory of the embodied state. Technologies of self-care create a different condition for embodiment, activating the voice as a means of exerting agency. These technologies also put into motion the diva's private practice and performance. She then invested in vocal lessons, seeking a return on that investment when she entered the market of cultural goods. Her investment also allowed her to become an object (with currency) of cultural capital with social mobility. The embodied state could therefore be described as "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body."³⁸ Bourdieu elaborates upon how the subject, by undergoing the process of becoming cultural capital, "presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation, which,

³⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital" in *Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J. E. Richardson, trans. Richard Nice (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986), 47.

insofar as it implies a labor of inculcation and assimilation, costs time which must be invested personally by the investor. Like the acquisition of a muscular physique or a suntan, it cannot be done as second hand.”³⁹

Each diva acted as a cultural symbol through her performance as well as through her training/education to form the middle space. Bourdieu's concept of embodied state demonstrates how each singer invested her monetary capital to accrue the social or symbolic capital of a diva. And, even more important, she invested her time and energy to be present first-hand (embodied). To better understand the embodied state of the diva, we must elucidate how the diva's entry into culture did not just involve an aural component; it deeply involved the presence of the singing body. In turn, through these processes as both signified and bodily vocalization, we might be able to more effectively recognize how her singing returns us to the pastoral theme of her transition from nature to culture.

In the tradition of *bel canto*, the vocal teacher helped the singer discover and bring out the fullest capability of her body and voice (as vocality or vocal body) as a way of unveiling her potential as a performer in a public venue. For a professional opera singer, and even more so, a diva *prima donna*, the singing teacher who had mastered the art of instructing *bel canto* was imperative. *Bel canto* singing is best described as the kinesthetic coordination of breath, vocal mechanism, and musicianship to create voice. More specifically, it is a “highly refined use of the laryngeal, respiratory, and articulatory muscles in order to produce special qualities of timbre, evenness of scale and register,

³⁹ Ibid.

breath control, flexibility, tremulousness, and expressiveness.”⁴⁰ As a highly athletic art, operatic singing required the diva’s absolute trust that the teacher would preserve and protect the physical integrity (and, for some, spiritual integrity) of one of the most delicate and powerful parts of the anatomy: the vocal apparatus. The vocal apparatus resides in the throat, including the larynx and the glottis. This includes the most temperamental part—it’s the anatomy that produces the sound of voice, two lips of cartilage covered in mucous, the vocal cords. For most, learning to sing entailed a long process of building muscle and sensation, and also involved intellect and muscle memory to coordinate the vocal apparatus, musculature, and controlled breath as support to produce voice.

I now move on to my second claim: that we may understand how the diva maintained middle space and vocalic space in terms of Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*. Bourdieu writes about habitus as a series of dispositions that agents acquire either in childhood from family upbringing, and/or education, and practice. Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus effectively explains how opera singers can discipline their own bodies in a realm understood as *unconsciously* or *inherently classed* as the habitual. By doing so, the diva could be traced through the embodiment of her labor from a classed position, back to a staged performance, and then back to vocal practice and pedagogy.

Divas adopted what Marcel Mauss designates as *habitus*, a series of “body techniques” for becoming upwardly mobile within their social sphere: “The ways in

⁴⁰ John Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), xx–xxi.

which from society to society men know how to use their bodies.”⁴¹ Lind was known as a natural singer who had damaged her voice because of the lack of habitus or body technique. Although she was well-established within high-society in Europe (being Queen Victoria’s favorite prima donna), her position was unsustainable. Lind relied upon Garcia, as Mauss explains, “for training related to being ‘technical,’ ‘traditional,’ and ‘efficient’: that is, they are constituted by a specific set of movements or form; they are acquired by means of training or education; and they serve a definite purpose or function.”⁴² Without acquiring the habitus from her training with Garcia, Lind could have left opera with an even earlier retirement or moved to a less-demanding style of singing affiliated with less affluent social strata.

Goffman writes about how positions in social strata are so temporal and fluctuating that performers must adapt, stay flexible, and be responsive in different ways. Just as divas acquired “body techniques” through education, as Mauss describes “Different social groups [. . .] assume different postures and a different gait.”⁴³ Both Mauss and Bourdieu also write about how the social actor (or, for my purposes, the performer) might respond physically to either avoid or fit in with desirable social strata. Bourdieu wrote about the physicality of these gestures as reliant upon muscle memory, residing below the consciousness of the agent, comparing it to what an athlete might describe as reacting by instinct not thought because one has a “feel for the game.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Nick Crossley, “Body Techniques, Agency, and Intercorporeality: On Goffman’s Relations in Public,” *Sociology* 29, no. 1 (1995): 97; M. Mauss, *Body Techniques in Sociology and Psychology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 81.

⁴² Mauss, *Body Techniques*, 85.

⁴³ Ibid.

Habitus, thus, is opposed to rationality and a detached mental “strategizing” on how to play, say, a soccer game. This dichotomy can be compared to the habitus of a player who physically responds to make the winning point, based on his muscle memory and training. Habitus is part of the “embodied state,” when one acquires “long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body.”⁴⁵ For the diva, these dispositions were then shared and displayed to help maintain the conditions that helped produce them. The conditions that produced them were based on the objectification of these dispositions to form different forms of “capital.” The field of vocal pedagogy as a preparatory phase of the diva’s career leveraged her as a performer for the field of opera.

My third line of inquiry considers how the diva’s body can be quantified for a viable economy or market, a concept Bourdieu addresses in his term, *field*. The field enables artists to have objectified relations with their art and with one another. Field thus refers to such objectifications as economic capital, cultural capital, symbolic capital, social capital, and symbolic capital. Economic capital is monetary or financial wealth. Cultural capital includes one’s education, habitus, and cultural expertise. Social capital is the influential people or institutions one has in his/her network. Symbolic capital lies with those who can tap into the dominant and most acknowledged capital in society.⁴⁶

Bourdieu’s field functions as a pluralist space of objectified relationships among varied positions explained through a performer participating within each position in

⁴⁴ Nick Crossley, “Body Techniques, Agency, and Intercoporeality: On Goffman’s Relations in Public,” *Sociology* 29, no. 1 (1995): 134.

⁴⁵ Pierre Bourdieu. “The Forms of Capital,” in *Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J. E. Richardson, trans. Richard Nice (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986), 47.

⁴⁶ Gay Morris, “Bourdieu, the Body, and Graham’s Post-War Dance,” *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 19, no. 2 (2001): 56.

relation to other performers. Thus, these positions are competitive, and women opera singers vied to be the best at an art form that already demanded perfection and virtuosic talents. At the top, opera singers competed for the supreme title of diva. If she got it, a singer would be considered the most accomplished artist in a medium already considered by many to be the premiere art-form because of its high demands musically, physically, and dramatically. A discussion about the diva and epistemes, thus, answers my three inquiries about the productivity and agential capacities of self-care.

As a facilitator of these singers, the vocal teacher took on three different ideological fields of power, or epistemes: the scientific, the empirical, and the liberal modern. Foucault's definition of episteme as "scientific discourses . . . an open and doubtless indefinitely describable field of relationships" supports each of these configurations of the diva.⁴⁷ The first viewed the diva in terms of her vocal apparatus, thus anatomically. The second saw her as a possible ideal of beauty that attempted but never quite replaced the castrati. Finally, the third saw the diva as an artist who had the ability to make choices to interpret opera by integrating bodily knowledge or through the sensation of singing with her intellect.

Manuel Garcia II viewed the opera singer's body as a machine. For the nonsinger to learn to sing, she had first to understand the anatomy and physiology of her vocal mechanism. In Chapter 2, Lind learned how to use Garcia's vocal science pedagogy to more effectively sing operatically, and to prevent vocal damage from incorrect technique or breathing. However, she refused the vocal science episteme, asserting that she had learned from being inspired by God and listening to birds. In doing so, Lind rejected the

⁴⁷ Michel Foucault et al., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 55.

scientific episteme Garcia promoted—an opera singer evolved from a cry, to speech, to singing—and helped a person evolve out of animalistic traits and cultivated humanness to reach the perfection of an embodied instrument of art.

Francesco Lamperti saw the opera singer's body as a vessel for the idealization of art of the bel canto era. As discussed in Chapter 3, Lamperti was an empirical vocal pedagogue who rejected Garcia's assertions to treat the prima donna as a product of scientific discipline. Rather, he believed that the prima donna and composer interconnected to produce art, and that the prima donna was there to help materialize the composer's genius. Although she started with Lamperti's empirical vocal pedagogy of hard work, physical discipline, and nonscientific explanation for vocal processes, Patti rejected the Romantic myth that so often supported such a technique. Instead, Patti used the *divine monster* to continue to sing long after her coloratura vocal range had faded (that was considered ideal for Lamperti). As divine monster, her stereotypical prima donna attributes (being demanding and difficult), claimed time and space for self-care when she was a virtuosic coloratura. As she moved into old age, she chose a more suitable repertoire to keep up the status as divine monster, because she was still very much in demand. She also chose different repertoire to account for the fading upper range of her coloratura voice.

Lilli Lehmann is the only vocal pedagogue covered here who was also a high-ranking prima donna assoluta. As discussed in Chapter 4, she viewed the opera singer's body as having a rich capacity for muscle memory and artistic agency for learning how to sing. As a liberal, modern, vocal pedagogue, Lehmann encouraged singers to follow their senses and intellect to make artistic choices as professionals and individuals. Differing

from vocal-science and empirical epistemes, Lehmann did not treat the opera singer as either a vocal mechanism or a channel for the idealization of art. Lehmann's open dialogue and allowance of individual interpretations of roles gave Farrar the leverage to focus on physical action and realistic characterizations and not the primacy of bel canto pure voice.

Through her performance, training, and education, each diva acted as a cultural symbol to form the middle space. Bourdieu's concept of embodied state elucidates the meaning behind how singers invested their monetary capital for social, cultural, or symbolic capital. Even more importantly, Bourdieu's concept sheds light on how each diva's relationship to her body acted in the process of learning how to sing and continuing this practice. It also demonstrates how she attributed (or did not) her skills to the three epistemes of each of her teachers. The next section looks at how the middle space, as a set of embodied and linguistic practices, figures into negotiating pastoralism through sexuate difference.

Negotiating the Pastoral with Sexuate Difference

In this section on negotiating the pastoral with sexuate difference, I continue to parse the diva's close ties to naturalness/artifice, beginning with her cultural inheritance from the animal. Grosz writes about the "woman" and the "animal" as an interconstituent construct promoted in Western thought. Through my discussion of the various divas examined in this dissertation, I scrutinize how these primal aspects figure in the diva's vocal production and art. I examine the diva's self-positioning vis-à-vis this cultural inheritance from animals (or nonhuman forms), whether she chose to identify with one in the garden as a nightingale, a bird, an angel, or one in the wild, as a goose, or tiger. To

resolve the diva's response to cultural inheritance of animals, I employ Irigaray's theory of self-affection, to which I also refer in these pages as self-care. According to my reading of Irigaray, self-affection cultivates an *autonomic breath* into *conscious breath* to provide a space of difference between divas and audiences. Instead of the diva having been caught in instinct, such as the death drive or the sex drive, with Irigaray's ethics of communication of conscious breath, the diva could choose to act a different way. As considered closely in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, when the diva vocalized operatically from an intention of self-care (not destruction), she activated this conscious breath. In turn, her sexuation could be realized in a way that enabled integrity, respect, and transition for female subjects.

Without self-affection or practices of self-care, diva narratives ran the risk of collapse or self-destruction under the pressure of the dialectic of primal/immateriality to situate the diva as a vulgar, debased object and/or as carrying the potential outlet for a perfect art. The configuration presents a dualistic form of mimesis and mimicry in which the diva will always be reduced to her animal/natural immediacy after she had served the purpose (or failed to serve the purpose) of transcendence (or desire). This configuration of primal/immateriality, therefore, is exactly what this dissertation attempts to push up against and challenge. It attempts to position the diva away from an isolated subjecthood toward sociality with ethics of communication and practices of self-care. Only then could the diva sustain a life following her entrance into the modern social world.

If the animal mimicks the human, as Darwin's account attested, what happens when the human mimicks the animal? And, does the type of animal matter? How did sexuation come into play when the diva mimicked the animal as a woman performer? For

example, Lind and Patti were both compared to *nightingale* and *angel* (angel not as animal, but as inhuman). These unhuman nicknames that the divas adopted, however, did not directly connect them to the animal world; rather, they only came from nostalgic, paradisiacal gardens of human design meant to ward off the wilderness of the physicality (and culture of her body) required for the diva to sing operatically. The angel and nightingale also attempted to ward off the diva's artifice as a woman of work, skill, and mastery of technique.

The garden as middle space was an important aspect of the diva's relationship to animals or inhuman forms (as nightingale and angel) because it served as a way for the diva to display her Nature—as the civilized control of her body—to separate from the physicality of her body and her otherwise closer ties to the natural world. We saw in Chapter 2 that Lind was perhaps furthest in the garden as the Swedish Nightingale and the angel, two nonhuman forms that supported her virtuous image. The nightingale was known for its musicality as a bird with a commanding and beautiful song. Lind, by taking on the persona of Swedish Nightingale, presented herself as half-bird, half-woman. Learning from birds to sing became a way of differentiating the natural talent of mimicking birds from the possibility that her voice was trained and disciplined by Garcia's vocal science. Because Lind's relationship with the pastoral and the garden was closest to Edenic, the angel's association with her voice was like a heavenly space separate from artificial things and urban landscapes.

In *The Angel's Cry*, Poizat refers to the castrati as the angel, whose promise of the immaterial voice was a “quest for the vocal object . . . a radically purified voice . . . mobilized with unmatched intensity . . . becoming not only instrumental sound but

supreme instrumental sound . . . It is the divine voice par excellence.”⁴⁸ Although Lind and Patti couldn’t match the promise of the castrati as angel with a “supreme instrumental sound,” the expectation for them was to be kept safe by the haven of the garden as middle space, to create a nostalgic paradise. As discussed in Chapter 3, Patti, with the Arcadian qualities of art and persona, mediated between the pastoral and the garden. In the spirit of the Arcadian paradise of Virgil’s *Eclogues*, Patti, as the angel, held the pressure to stand between the two worlds of the wilderness and city, held together with the perfection of her art, and later the nostalgia provoked by the role of the piano girl.

Carolyn Abbate writes about singing as an embodied practice necessary to understanding the meaning of operatic “works.” She describes operatic singing as meaningful within its different modes of philosophically-bound experiences as “phenomenal or noumenal.”⁴⁹ As Grover-Friedlander explains, Abbate’s defined aspects of operatic singing form “the very distinction between the material and the transcendental”—for example, when a corporeal, athletic, and disciplined practice produced the vocality of singing operatically. However, operatic singing was required to produce the effect of this song as transcendent, feminine, divine, and ephemeral. This contrast produces the primal/immaterial dialectic. Thus, as Poizat and Abbate describe it, the expectations of the diva to sing operatically served as an authorizing function of the transcendental in drawing us away from a focus on materiality. By doing so, the diva was captured within the primal/immaterial dialectic and thus served as nothing more than an

⁴⁸ Michel Poizat, *The Angel’s Cry: Beyond the Pleasure Principle in Opera* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Press, 1992), 117.

⁴⁹ Carolyn Abbate, “Music—Drastic or Gnostic?” *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 3 (2004): 505.

object-voice, a perfect instrument—“divine voice par excellence.”⁵⁰

Mladen Dolar describes the objectified voice, otherwise known as the *object-voice*, as part of a psychoanalytic process of vocalization as *interiority* and *exteriority* that results in the development of self-consciousness, subjectivity, and subject formation.⁵¹ The object-voice, thus, is part of the process of the diva-subject discovering the interior-exterior boundaries created by the voice and, this process of discovery, in turn forms sociality by establishing and keeping boundaries between *self* and *other*.

Dolar describes the object-voice as a psychoanalytic concept that refers to very early modes of contact from a parent or caregiver. The object here is figured as an outside other meant to help a developing subject acquire self-consciousness. As a student-singer, the diva negotiates an object-voice as her vocal teacher helps her develop her consciousness as a trained singer. Josh Gunn explains that the infant only becomes conscious as a subject when it separates from the parent (or object).⁵² The infant gains awareness of the boundaries of its own body and those of others. Just as the infant starts to realize that he/she depends upon others to keep his/her body intact, to get sustenance and nurturing, the diva depends on her teacher to sustain the health of her body and voice, trusting him/her with some of the most delicate anatomy, the vocal apparatus, and especially the vocal cords. This dependence could conceivably create the object-voice, a separation of self from other that, if not treated properly, could ruin her voice, body,

⁵⁰ Poizat, *Angel's Cry*, 117.

⁵¹ Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006).

⁵² Joshua Gunn, “Speech is Dead; Long Live Speech,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94, no. 3 (2008): 345.

health, and ultimately, take her life. Indeed, she might have suffered and sacrificed her life just to obtain the ephemerality of the pure voice as object.

In Chapter 3, I described the *portamento*, produced only by the castrato singer who was able to jump a third interval or more with a “pure voice” without vibrato. Audiences considered the effect of such vocal technique ephemeral, beautiful, and transcendent. In contrast, as Naomi André explains of contemporary audiences, portamento from the castrati sounded as if the singer were sobbing, thereby evoking what today’s listeners might consider the trauma castrati singers experienced. This trauma was followed by the lamenting sound of the diva, robbed of her health and life by the struggle to achieve the perfection of voice.⁵³ Thus, as Poizat says, and Lévi-Strauss said before, as speaking beings, the listener also experiences pleasure from listening to vocality that overwhelms language, speech, and signification.⁵⁴

In their nicknames as nightingale and angel, Lind and Patti transcended human form, and experienced a sort of symbolic death that separated them from physical limitations, and in doing so, sacrificed their worldliness as a way to deify them: “The diva herself appears at the moment the Angel becomes Woman; her appearance reintroduces via the vocalist the attribute of divine substitution or identification.”⁵⁵ Through Poizat and Dolar, I compare the object-voice to the “divine substitution or identification” of castrati (as men who forsook their identity in order to become deified),

⁵³ Naomi André, *Voicing Gender: Castrati, Travesti, and the Second Woman in Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 19.

⁵⁴ Poizat, *Angel’s Cry*, x; Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Naked Man*, trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman (London: Jonathan Cape, 1981), 647.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 179.

and as diva as “woman” who sacrificed her life to become an “angel” to achieve vocal perfection.

Farrar, in contrast to Lind and Patti, as the modern diva did not try to cover up her association with physicality, the animal world, or the artifice of the garden. She was quick to admit that she did not have the “perfect instrument” of the object-voice that Poizat and Dolar describe as immaterial because she declined the opportunity to study with Mathilde Marchesi, Manuel Garcia’s protégé and, in general, refused to fully develop her voice according to bel canto tradition. Instead, Farrar dropped the bel canto “pure voice” signifier to embrace her animal side, as described by audiences and critics after witnessing her invigorated and modern interpretation of Carmen. Farrar’s performances of Carmen on stage and screen were savage and bestial, and the singer herself gloated when Caruso said he didn’t appreciate Farrar’s “tiger-like tactics.”⁵⁶ In contrast to Lind’s and Patti’s need to distance themselves from their cultural inheritance from animals, Farrar compared herself to a goose, both domesticated and wild. Farrar wrote about fois gras paté geese that had been tortured by having nails driven through their feet, force fed until fat, and kept captive in a cage so they would be immobile and fattened even more. Farrar was inspired by the leading role, the Goose Girl, of Engelbert Humperdinck’s opera *Königskinder* when Farrar brought live geese on stage (that she had trained and rehearsed with) as part of her interpretation. Farrar compared the lives and condition of these geese to that of the prima donna:

That I understood in a flash, was what had happened to me, I, too had been nailed to the floor by the circumstances of my life as an opera singer. No air had been as delicious to me as the musty, oxygenless air of the stage. I had taken no pains to breathe any other. I had had no exercise because I never took a step I didn’t have

⁵⁶ Farrar, *Such Sweet Compulsion*, 170.

to. I had been chained as the goose was and with the same effect, I, too, had fattened, only, unlike the poor goose of Strasburg, I was not suffering from fatty degeneration of the liver, at least I hoped I had not. I had not reached the *fois gras* stage, but I might.”⁵⁷

Farrar was critical of the very star system of the Met to which she belonged, and expressed this opinion by comparing the sedentary lifestyle of the prima donna to that of a tortured, farm-raised animal. In Chapter 4, I referred to Farrar’s articles that promoted exercise for young women not only to discipline the body, but also to achieve better focus and direction personally and professionally.⁵⁸ In her own way, Farrar wrote about the importance of women exercising their bodies as well as their minds as practices of sexuation and sexuate difference as self-care.

I have theorized Irigaray’s work on self-affection to support the practices of operatic voice as productive of self-love, self-care, and an ethics of communication.⁵⁹ The interiority of practicing and learning operatic voice through conscious, sexuated breath, could create a space in which opera singers might exist in the modern social world not as competitors or icons, but as allies. Women opera singers who formed self-affection did so first to integrate sexuation, breath, and operatic voice for modes of self-care. Through a “co-constitutive teaching practice of *entre deux*,” the vocal teacher and student

⁵⁷ Geraldine Farrar, “How I Learned from a Goose to Get Thin,” *The Washington Post*, December 29, 1912, MS5.

⁵⁸ Jennifer Fleege, *Mismatched Women: The Siren's Song Through the Machine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Paul Fryer, *The Opera Singer and the Silent Film* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2005), 169–170; Geraldine Farrar, “I Sacrifice Tonal Beauty to the Dramatic Fitness,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, April 15, 1911, 5; Geraldine Farrar, “How I Learned from a Goose to Get Thin,” *The Washington Post*, December 29, 1912, MS5.

⁵⁹ Shannon Wong Lerner, “All my Work is Performance: Irigarayan Methods of Breath for Dance and Voice,” in *Breathing with Luce Irigaray*, ed. Emily A. Holmes and Lenart Skof (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2013).

could share the space in practices of conscious breath.⁶⁰ Through this process, the diva may have been configured as a modern subject who shared the performance space with audiences and one another in a way that preserved her well-being, health, and life rather than to sacrifice it for art:

Irigaray's term to signify 'the gesture between the two,' [happens as] we are surrounded by the fluid properties fundamental to voice (Todd 1995, p. 5). Air is taken in as breath, but so is the mucoid that has been used to describe the mucous membranes as the 'internal economy' protected by feminine morphology. These forms of fluidity are necessary for the *entre deux* in theory, language, and material practice, the fluid substance that allows for two people to stay in the same space, shared while protecting their identity to not pass into the space of the other.⁶¹

Irigaray describes breath as our first food from our mothers, and our first autonomous gesture at birth. Through the ethics of silence, listening, and conscious breath, the diva was afforded entrance into the modern social world through an act of what Irigaray calls "self-affection," and what I have called in this dissertation "self-care." In Chapter 2, we saw that Lind took on practices of self-care when she opened a space for both the echo and ventriloquism, allowing multiple personae to come through with her singing. In Chapter 3, Patti performed acts of self-care when she refused the self-destructive narrative and trajectory of Romantic prima donnas or divas such as Malibran and Callas. Instead, Patti used practices of self-care by redefining the prima donna as "divine monster," demanding, difficult, and markedly distant from the Romantic diva who sacrificed the self for art to also risk her mortality. In Chapter 4, Farrar also took on practices of self-care by dismissing the old Italian *bel canto* school of singing, whose rigor she feared would destroy her unique "color" of voice. Instead, Farrar focused on

⁶⁰ Ibid., 156.

⁶¹ Wong Lerner, "All My Work is Performance," 156; Sharon Todd, "Curriculum Theory as In(ter)vention: Irigaray and the Gesture" (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Research Association, San Francisco, California, April 1995).

new interpretations of Carmen through film first, and then she transferred her sensational performance to the Met. By drawing upon Irigaray's discourse about an ethics of communication beginning with silence, listening, and then turning to a conscious breath practice, we might discover something about the feminine employed in diva practices of self-care.

Words such as "mimesis," "performativity," "utopia," "becoming," "difference," and "iteration" can be borrowed from Elizabeth Grosz to describe the middle space between nature and culture or naturalness and artifice alongside sexual difference.⁶² As a common trait, these words each help us imagine possibilities of artifice—as the enhancement of the human body to become something more than was previously imagined—to become that which does not yet exist within a system to allow for new futures of bodies.⁶³ In her 1990 book *Gender Trouble*, Butler explains that gender operates from performativity. Performativity, then, is that which culturally and socially inscribes, and allows a subject to use "repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts" to draw attention to the "compulsory frames set by the various forces that police the social appearance of gender."⁶⁴ However, in Butler's later book, *Bodies that Matter*, the author complexifies her word, and for our purposes, her revision accommodates a working definition compatible to the situatedness of the diva with artifice. In this case,

⁶² Pheng Cheah and Elizabeth Grosz, "The Future of Sexual Difference: An Interview with Judith Butler and Drucilla Cornell," *Diacritics* 28.1 (1998): 40.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 33.

performativity becomes artifice by including signification as language and identity that manifests with speech acts, citationality, and iterability.⁶⁵

Butler's newer version of performativity is compatible with the definition of artifice as a series of performative gestures and speech acts. Michelle Duncan theorizes performativity as occurring when an opera singer performs live as a *vocal performative* (as compared to speech).⁶⁶ The gendered body, as performative, creates unstable identities or *identification* (as a continual process of *identity*) that challenge stable or symbolic standards of identity. Thus, the voice, as a form of artifice, might disrupt the "stable" categories Butler asserts become challenged with socio-symbolic-linguistic performative acts.

Butler's debt to Derrida's deconstructivism, citationality and iterability act to "deconstruct" the "sign" or signature to ensure it doesn't leave a permanent "mark." Rather, citationality and iterability work together to continually disrupt the presence of the mark. Derrida explains that "in order to be legible, a signature must have a repeatable, utterable, imitative form; it must be able to detach itself from the present and singular intention of its production."⁶⁷ From voice lessons, to the stage, to her personae off stage, the diva was always already part of a "site" as bodily and discursively controlled and situated. In *Bodies that Matter*, Butler explains that bodies can be contoured or

⁶⁵ Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2011).

⁶⁶ Michelle Duncan. "The Operatic Scandal of the Singing Body: Voice, Presence, Performativity," *Cambridge Opera Journal* Vol. 16, No. 3 (2004): 283-306.

⁶⁷ Jacques Derrida and Peggy Kamuf, *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blind* (Columbia University Press, 1991), 107.

constituted discursively so that we might also apply to the diva's revealing of artifice as the manipulation of her own body for work, skill, or mastery of voice.

The Middle Space, Mediatized and Live Performance

Classical musicology scholarship has historically privileged the diva for her operatic voice as a live event and her artistic contribution. Subsequently, scholars of the diva apologize for the diva appearing aside from opera in other art forms, medias, and time periods.⁶⁸ Cowgill and Poriss explain the impulse to criticize any iteration of the prima donna or the diva once her operatic voice has faded, and particularly after the technologies of recording and film mainstreamed the diva from live opera performer to mediatized figure. Although they are interested in the examples of the prima donna or diva of early recording and silent film technologies, Cowgill and Poriss reject the opera diva who has slipped into the category of mainstream or popular culture. They describe recording and the separation of body and voice that occurs in a prima donna's "aura" or "live" stage presence as an authentic art, inherently critiquing "a new age, raised to a new level concerns over the commodification, commercialization, and mechanization of the female voice."⁶⁹ However, they do not offer this appraisal as part of an attempt to unite or re-articulate the diva's "aura" back to her body after her art has become mediatized. Rather, they do so to show how the two *do not* fit together, and hence to prove the need for the diva's or prima donna's authenticity as a stage performer.

⁶⁸ Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss, eds., *The Art of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), xxxv; Hilary Poriss, *Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas and the Authority of Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 130, 134; Hilary Poriss, "Divas and Divos," in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 373-394; Susan Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera, 1815–1930* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁶⁹ Cowgill and Poriss, eds., *Art of the Prima Donna*, xliii.

Jennifer Fleegeer writes about a woman's mediatised voice in terms of being "mismatched" compared to her actual body's production and her persona.⁷⁰ Fleegeer writes about the woman's dissociated voice that sounds strong and perfect; but, she explains, her body is separated from its production by virtue of transmission through recording, film, and social media. The persona of the "mismatched woman" is weak or awkward; her reception occurs through the production of "alienation and desire." Fleegeer raises concerns about the woman's dissociated voice, alienation, and desire as "key terms in a feminist interrogation of a gendered society."⁷¹ Fleegeer adds to Cowgill and Poriss's concerns about the place of the prima donna within the Lacanian fantasy and the impossibility of women's voices to be "real." "Real," in this case, is the psychoanalytic subject's impossible desire for maternal love (and an actual "embodied" experience).

Fleegeer's theorization of women's "mismatched" voices to embodied experience fits particularly well in a discussion of a mediatised landscape. I respond to musicologists and media studies in the form of sexuated pastoral criticism to ensure that the diva didn't become trapped in a natural existence based purely upon her bodily production of the live voice. Cowgill, Poriss, and Fleegeer explain their unwillingness to consider other genres or the possibility of technology or mediatisation, and also include a fully-embodied operatic vocal subject. The diva had to choose between her body (or self) and her voice. By not being accepted in multiple genres and mediums, the diva ran the risk of being demoted to a classical Cartesian subject and reduced to the limiting structures of dualism.

The well-known debate between performance studies critics Peggy Phelan and

⁷⁰ Jennifer Fleegeer, *Mismatched Women: The Siren's Song Through the Machine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁷¹ Ibid., 20.

Phillip Auslander takes up this argument within performance studies and media. Phelan writes about the ontology of performance—defined by its “presence” and “liveness.”⁷² Phelan insists upon *ontology* and *presence* of performance reliant upon *liveness*, defining the former through the live appearance of a performer in front of an audience based on a set time and place. Presence, therefore, depends upon the close proximity of performers and audience within a short duration of time. Conversely, Phillip Auslander contends that performances as “live” or “mediatized” should not need to be seen as distinct, but rather should be framed through a “partnership” between “live theatre” and “media.”⁷³ He proposes that we consider mediatized performance in terms of Jean Baudrillard’s definition, which is as a cultural product of mass media that acts as culturally dominant in contemporary Westernized societies. Further, in the words of Fredric Jameson, “mediatized” may signify “the process [through which] the traditional fine arts come to consciousness of themselves as various media within a mediatic system.”⁷⁴ Auslander takes Jameson’s definition to further the inclusion of mediatized performance as an undeniable part of the performance world because “they have been forced by economic reality to acknowledge their status as media within a mediatic system that includes the mass media and information technologies.”⁷⁵

In their contemporary mediatization of the diva, opera companies have turned to interactive film installations as part of their set design to attract younger audiences.

⁷² Peggy Phelan, “The Ontology of Performance: Representation without Reproduction,” in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 146-166.

⁷³ Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

⁷⁴ Auslander, *Liveness*, 5–6; Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1991), 162.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

Although opera is a live art that depends upon the training of the opera singer, microphones are used in performances, especially in large halls such as the Met, which hosts a “live” streaming service of their operas in HD with participating movie theatres worldwide. But as we have seen in these chapters, the diva had always already existed in confluence with technology. Even with the naturalness/artifice bifurcation in the diva’s persona, she was both enabled and constrained by the inclusion of technology and media. However, the modern, pastoral argument contrasts Fleegeer’s stance, which pits the “real” maternal voice of the siren against her mediatization and use of technology. Divas within a modern, pastoral framework gathered technology first from their bodies, participating with artifice through training, work, and operatic bel canto singing. They created the technological sublime through the evidence of their relationship with artifice, which was made even more obvert through their performances in which they transformed feminine ideals, such as Lind’s Swedish heritage with the “echo,” as compared to when she performed “ventriloquism” with bel canto technique.

As this quick summary indicates, the debate between live and mediatized performances is a charged one; however, even in the time period when they began touring in the United States, these divas were mediatized. As discussed in Chapter 2, Jenny Lind transitioned the echo from the ideal feminine of her Edenic association with Swedish pastoral scenery into the skill and choice of ventriloquism. With ventriloquism as a technology, Lind’s singing was compared to machines such as the train and a gun. Phelan’s argument about privileging live performances promotes a Luddite fantasy of opera or other live, social forms of performance as superior to popular, mediatized, and commercial performances. However, as we have learned with Bourdieu’s notions of field

and different forms of capital (and from Chapter 2 with the duplicity of Lind's altruism), even a liberal, social performance can become a form of cultural or symbolic capital. No performance is exempt or too moral to be included in an economy.

I believe the cultural hierarchization of live over mediatized can be subverted. To consider this possibility, I apply Walter Benjamin's optimistic writings about mass culture and art to our understanding of diva performances (including the mediatized *and* live) with political possibilities. One of the main arguments presented by proponents of Auslander's work is that critical thinking and representation are sacrificed to the superiority of live appearance. Auslander's comments that this exclusion is made obvert by prefacing "live" with "real," while "mediatized" performance are regarded as a stand-in or as an "artificial reproduction of the real."⁷⁶

Similarly, Walter Benjamin describes the aura as the inimitable indication of artistic presence and "Western metaphysics." Benjamin comments on how the aura becomes lost with reproduction. However, he explains that this loss of "presence" of a privileged "Western metaphysics" is not necessarily a negative loss. Fleegeer explains "aura" as Benjamin's idea of "presence: it is felt in one's nearness to a painting, a landscape, a mountain, or even an actor."⁷⁷ When the phonograph became commercial, Fleegeer explains, Benjamin argued that the "aura" became less important to people.⁷⁸ In her own writings on sirens and technology, Fleegeer explains the aura became fused with

⁷⁶ Auslander, *Liveness*, 3.

⁷⁷ Jennifer Fleegeer, *Mismatched Women: The Siren's Song Through the Machine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 4-5.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

the “maternal voice.”⁷⁹ In comparison with Benjamin’s aura as art one had to be fully present to experience, Fleeger asserts, a greater value was put upon the maternal voice. The maternal voice cannot be imitated; it is an example of the “real.” However, according to the Lacanian definition of the “real,” one cannot replicate “love” or such a “pure” affection outside of the developmental, “imaginary” stage, after which, adding Fleeger’s argument, one enters social and symbolic networks of meaning, language or, in our case, technology, and becomes isolated and alienated from felicity, love, and the fulfillment of desire.

Unlike many contemporary performance studies scholars today, Benjamin does not focus on the phenomenal or metaphysical loss that occurs with technology, but rather the temporal and material losses. In this way, he more closely focuses on ways in which users of these technologies manage shifts in space and time, as part of their relationship with temporality and materiality. Benjamin critiques the notion of artistic authenticity because most artworks, in some form or another, are reproducible. Also, technologies that facilitate this reproduction have been available for thousands of years. Live and mediatized art may experience a fluid relationship. Benjamin focuses on “new mechanical forms of artistic reproduction,” using photography and talkies as examples.⁸⁰ These media erase art’s sense of originality because one can reproduce multiple copies from one negative. These media thus are distinguished not by their originality or uniqueness, but by their ability to reproduce.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁸⁰ Andrew M. Kimbrough, *Dramatic Theories of Voice in the Twentieth Century* (Amherst, New York, 2011), 203; Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968).

I have demonstrated this alliance between the live and mediatized throughout this dissertation, particularly in terms of the technological sublime that is created when the diva transformed her body from naturalness to artifice. In modern, pastoral art, the diva challenges the privileging of the original and the unique aspects of her vocal art. Fleegeer writes about the maternal ideal of the woman's voice as having a direct effect on the development of the child through the discourse of psychoanalysis.

According to Irigaray, women might find more fulfilling examples of their own subjecthood through a metaphorization of sexual difference (as *sexuate*). Instead of the literal interpretation of sexual difference as women's voices coming from a maternal ideal, women might express their femininity as *sexuate* through their "singular desire."⁸¹ "Singular desire" translates into the diva's "singular pleasure" as a successful, modern, working woman. This singular desire then further makes "real" their embodied experiences and perceptions of being women in the modern social world. Although she may have performed sentimentality for her public image, a successful modern working woman may have neglected her personal life or her role as wife and mother for her job and professional success. Irigaray's translation of the modern woman therefore defies previously-held beliefs that women's historicity depends upon their reproductive function or caregiving instinct.

This chapter closes with an extended discussion of the possibility of a diva as a pastoral mediator through the experience of mediatizing to later go "live" in performance (in that order). Unpacking live performance in terms of mediatized performance both informs and expresses the exigency of including multiple, scholarly debates in this

⁸¹ Luce Irigaray, *I Love to You*, trans. Alison Martin (New York: Routledge, 1996), 19.

dissertation. For example, applying the order of performance from the mediatized to the live, rather than the typical live to mediatized order, intervenes in cultural studies, performance studies, opera studies and musicology, and media/technological studies. By bringing in the discourse of mediatization transitioning to a live performance, this chapter seeks to contribute to scholarly debates about the diva. Voice is integrated into this discussion only to be expanded upon and limited by its materiality or immateriality. Discussing the diva's mediatization before her experience of live performance challenges those who police the borders of art genres for cultural hierarchy and attempts to demonstrate how the "middle" in middle space crossed boundaries of mimesis. Also, the fact that the diva underwent an extreme transformation of a particular role as more physical, extemporaneous, and, even, violent includes a certain tactility found in mediatized performance for the entangled threads of such categories of body, text, and technology/media.

As discussed in this dissertation, the diva Geraldine Farrar formed a middle space through the repetition of her operatic role as Carmen, which she performed on film in 1915, and then on stage in 1916 with her legendary operatic performance. This transition from the live to the mediatized, and then from the mediatized back to the live explains the "tasks facing human perception at the turning points of history."⁸² Benjamin argues that these tasks could not be taken over by "optics" of mass reproduction. Benjamin also asserts that this transition to mediatized culture had to include a notion of the "tactile" in

⁸² Taussig, *Mimesis*, 34.

order to be mastered in the modern age.⁸³ Looking at this performance trajectory, I will seek to subvert the historiographical argument that privileges live performance over mediatized performance. Sumiko Higashi describes “a brief but intense period in American cinema history, in which filmmakers . . . seized the opportunity to hasten the elevation of cinema . . . in this case [with its] 'intertextuality' with the glamorous world of opera.”⁸⁴ By performing operatic roles as modern, mediatized women, opera singers distributed their symbolic capital, making it available to mass culture. The diva Geraldine Farrar, for example, realized this shift by maintaining an active role in film as a mediatized form of middle space. Also, Farrar did not revert to a passive role. In the self-authored article “The Art of Acting in the Movies Requires a Technique Unlike That of the Operatic Stage,”⁸⁵ Farrar related to her experience with film in a Benjaminian fashion, suggesting that manufacturing art from film has a reproductive effect. Importantly, however, reproduction doesn’t diminish the value of real-world “presence” or “aura” of the performer who appears in person in front of a live audience.

Instead, Farrar explained how she performed for a machine and a man behind the machine. The awkward and ugly “insides” of movie production radically differed from performing grand opera for a live audience of elites and society women. Part of the difference for Farrar had to do with repetition, the fact that performing film happened

⁸³ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, 217-252, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 238.

⁸⁴ Phil Powrie et al., *Carmen on Film: A Cultural History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 42; Sumiko Higashi, *Cecil B. DeMille and American Culture: The Silent Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 7.

⁸⁵ Elizabeth Nash, *Geraldine Farrar: Opera’s Charismatic Innovator* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2012), 143–49; Geraldine Farrar, “The Art of Acting in the Movies,” *Vanity Fair*, November 1918, 92.

twice, at least twice “after that, thousands of copies are distributed all over the world, and more than a million performances are given, without further trouble to the actors, directors or any of the participants involved.”⁸⁶

At her best in Hollywood, Farrar completed several pictures with the Famous Lasky Players (eventually to become Paramount Pictures). She worked, most famously, with Cecil B. DeMille, the American director known for his sensationalism, realism, and epic films. With film, she would have the opportunity to play Carmen as she always imagined. Farrar recounted that she was able to perform a scene as many times as she liked under the direction of Cecil B. DeMille, who instructed her to explore the depths of her artistic sensibilities, and instructed all other actors to follow her lead. In turn, DeMille put several cameras on her from all different angles to get the best possible shot during an uninterrupted scene in which she improvised and explored to get the best dramatic effect. Although Farrar at first struggled with not having an audience to “play off of” during performance, she began to get used to the camera as a “non-audience” of sorts. Because she didn’t have the pressure of a live audience to entertain, to have to perform for in that particular moment, Farrar relished cinematic time and space, composed as it is of endless repetition and experimentation to develop a character and a scene to a far greater extent than with opera. She was never rushed, and DeMille trusted her artistic sense of timing and choreography of a scene. Farrar recalled the difference in medium and acting style: “In grand opera, every gesture, every movement has to be in perfect accord with the score . . . But here. Ah, here it is different. At first I asked Mr. DeMille if there were any time limit to playing certain scenes. He said: 'You act them just as long as you please.' So now I emote for fifty, seventy-five or a hundred feet if the spirit

⁸⁶ Nash, *Geraldine Farrar*, 146; Farrar, “The Art of Acting,” 94.

moves me.”⁸⁷

Perhaps it was her recent experience with film acting that encouraged Farrar to act outside the script for the “Fight Scene” in DeMille’s film and at her infamous improvised performance at the Met. On February 17, 1916, she authored the “Fight Scene” live when she returned to the Met through an extemporaneous performance for Bizet’s *Carmen*. Just as she had been allowed in shooting *Carmen*, she did not follow the choreography she had rehearsed prior to the actual performance when she returned to the Met. Instead, Farrar developed a realist version of “The Fight Scene” that had never been performed on the opera stage. Farrar singlehandedly created the tradition of the “Fight Scene” for *Carmen*, presenting the spectacle of feminine violence and visceral physical action.

Farrar never considered that something would be lost by working through the medium of film. Rather, much was gained when she went back to the stage, because she was able to experiment and develop her characterization. She could then explore a physicality that she otherwise could not have explored on opera’s live stage. One might argue that it was not technology that helped Farrar push the limits she experienced on the stage, but rather the newness of the genre that made it wide open for experimentation. Farrar might just as well have gone to vaudeville or the theatre to explore. However, early film allowed aspects of middle space to form through the endless rehearsal process and the dilation of time and thought. These opportunities allowed her to cultivate her physicality as *Carmen*.

The Frankfurt School posited that exposure to mass media made audiences passive and obedient. The Frankfurt School was deeply concerned with debates between

⁸⁷ Simon Louvish, *Cecil B. DeMille: A Life in Art* (New York: St. Martin Press, 2007), 101.

mass culture and authentic art or true art.⁸⁸ However, I am reluctant to use the Frankfurt School to illuminate the comparison of Farrar's mediatised Carmen to her live Carmen. I would like to think that the diva, as a live stage singer who also performed in film, would not become lost within the mechanism of mass culture. Also, the diva would not become the copy of an original.

Adorno critiques Benjamin's vision of mass culture as overly optimistic, arguing that it does not take into full account the circulation and mass reproduction of art destroying its aura, or the complete manipulation of masses of people sure to follow. Thus, mass culture might also negatively affect the performer's and audience's abilities to think critically.⁸⁹ Elin Diamond describes this practice of repetition mixed with tactility as Benjamin's "mimetic thinking" or "thinking in 'similarities,' in sensuous relation."⁹⁰ As a process of the diva forming a "middle space" of Lind's or Patti's pastoral or Farrar's ultraprimitivist mediation, "mimetic thinking" activates our relationship to the land while we reveal our relationship with artifice. Mimetic thinking thereby acts as a way to embolden performers and audiences who materialize operatic voice with singing and listening, as we have learned as both symbolic-linguistic and bodily form as a vocalic space.

⁸⁸ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer gave preference to high art movements as possible political outlets when they had just started and before they fell victim to the culture industry's mass reproduction. They explain this preference "from Romanticism to Expressionism it had rebelled as unbridled expression, as the agent of opposition, against organization. In music, the individual harmonic effect had obliterated awareness of the form as a whole; in painting the particular detail had obscured the overall composition in the novel psychological penetration had blurred the architecture" (99). Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1991), 99; Benjamin, "Work of Art"; Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

⁸⁹ Theodor Adorno, *Current of Music*, ed. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

⁹⁰ Elin Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis: Essays on Feminism and Theatre* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 143.

Benjamin explains: “Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction.”⁹¹ The diva was highly-accessible across mediatized genres of performance, and thus evoked Benjamin’s optimism of mass culture. Benjamin hoped that mechanical reproduction would lead to the democratization of culture and art, thereby providing diverse populations access to exclusive forms of art and culture for political purposes, or as the Frankfurt School hoped, for revolution.

⁹¹ Benjamin, “Work of Art,” 35.

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